



Independent review of ANROWS

Commonwealth Department of Social Services

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Glossary

Acronym	Full name
4AP	Fourth Action Plan
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANRA	Australian National Research Agenda
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
ANZSOG	The Australia and New Zealand School of Government Limited
ARC	Australian Research Council
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COAG	The Commonwealth and state and territory governments
DSS	The Department of Social Services
GCT	Government and relevant agencies, Commonwealth, States and territories
ImpEG	National Plan for Reducing Violence against Women and their Children Implementation Executive Group
KTE	Knowledge Transfer and Exchange
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCAS	The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NPSO	National Plan Senior Officials
NRAP	National Risk Assessment Principles
NSW	New South Wales

PATRICIA	Pathways and Research In Collaborative Inter-Agency working
PEG	Practitioner Engagement Group
PSS	Personal Safety Survey
RARR	Register of Active and Recent Research
SRTs	Strategic Research Themes
The National Plan	The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022
TOM	Target Operating Model
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive summary

ANROWS is a unique organisation with a direct focus on research that informs policy and practice to address violence against women and their children.

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan) was established to connect the work done by Australian governments, community organisations and individuals to ensure that less women experience violence and that children and women can live safely. Currently, the National plan is in its fourth stage, which focuses on the concept of Turning the Corner.

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) was established in 2013 as a product of the National Plan to improve the evidence base available in the prevention of violence against women. Still today, it is one of the only organisations of its kind to have a direct focus and specific funding to drive the creation of evidence into domestic, family and sexual violence.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) engaged Deloitte to conduct an independent review of ANROWS.

With the National Plan nearing its completion, the review was focused on ANROWS performance and effectiveness to date and how it can be best positioned to deliver, including over the last two years of the National Plan.

The review was supported by extensive consultation with key stakeholders across the sector, and research activities, including:

- 58 stakeholder consultations, including ANROWS staff, practitioners, policy makers, benchmarking organisations, National Plan for Reducing Violence against Women and their Children Implementation Executive Group (ImpEG), National Plan Senior Officials (NPSO,) its board and researchers.
- Thematic analysis of consultations

- Desktop research and analysis of documents provided to Deloitte by the DSS and ANROWS

The review was guided by terms of reference agreed with ANROWS Commonwealth, state and territory members and is foreshadowed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the states and territories concerning the operation of ANROWS. The MoU set out the following focus areas:

- The extent to which ANROWS is meeting the objects of the company as outlined in the Constitution;
- The usefulness of ANROWS output for jurisdictional policy and program development (including its use in, or impact on, related state and territory family violence outcomes frameworks).

For the purposes of the review, references to the "sector" include all persons involved in the domestic, family and sexual violence fields. This includes policy makers, researchers, practitioners, peak bodies etc.

The role of a national research body and enhancing ANROWS' value proposition.

The review found that ANROWS has commissioned and produced a wide range of research to contribute to the national evidence base into domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia. Characterised by consultation participants as "filling the evidence gap", they noted a satisfaction with ANROWS to-date, but also an expectation to see ANROWS pivot and play a broader leadership role across the sector.

To understand this role, the review sought to define the role of a national research body. Based on interviews with several leading Australian and international research and data institutes, the review established seven key attributes that were found to characterise a national research body and that were applicable to ANROWS. These were determined to be: bold aspiration and clear strategy to impact, research leadership, research transparency, policy and knowledge brokerage, research coalitions, research excellence and a mechanism to measure impact.

In more fully understanding the expectations of stakeholders and the broader role that many research institutes are already taking, the review found that ANROWS operating model is more likened to an academic institute rather than a stand-alone research organisation designed to create impact through policy and practice.

This mode of operations has allowed ANROWS to create a robust approach to research and commissioning of projects, but has stifled its growth in other areas, particularly the direct use and implementation of its research into policy and legislative design. Overall, the review found its value proposition was limited by a lack of clarity on policy makers being their primary stakeholder, and in setting and delivering research that is appropriate for a national research organisation.

This is a significant finding, as without a clear and compelling value proposition, ANROWS will struggle to focus its strategy and create the impact its stakeholders desire.

Articulating a clear strategy and measuring impact.

This report identifies a number of findings and recommendations that assess the extent to which ANROWS is meeting its objectives. The usefulness and impact of its activities on its stakeholders and the wider community is also assessed. These findings and recommendations have been made across the following topics:

- Value proposition
- Strategy and funding
- Priority setting
- Research, translation and impact
- Stakeholders
- Governance, functionality and structure
- Organisation and people

The criteria used to assess each topic is explained further in Section 1. The core findings and recommendations identified are summarised below.

Conclusion

ANROWS has established itself as a research body that produces research and, in more recent years, focuses on how its research is translated. This includes making its research more readily digestible for use by policy makers and practitioners in the domestic, family and sexual violence sector. Much of this research has been focused to practitioner needs and, to a lesser extent, policy makers. This is likely due to ANROWS building upon the work of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, which purposefully engaged practitioners in research.

In order to demonstrate greater impact ANROWS should focus on policy makers as its primary stakeholders, with practitioners a secondary stakeholder. ANROWS can then better use its limited resources to target its research activities towards projects that directly impact on policy decisions. This will in turn drive a population level impact and provide greater value to its government funders, who are also the members of the ANROWS company. The review acknowledges that ANROWS as a result of its own strategic review endorsed in June 2020, is pivoting towards this.

To enable this focus and a greater level of responsiveness and agility to policy makers, ANROWS must broaden its role and pivot towards the role of a best practice national research body that more closely emulates the seven attributes described in Section 2.4. This requires focus on the issues that impact our community at large and delivering on activities such as setting a national research agenda to influence and inform the sector.

Strengthening capabilities and enabling tools will be needed to take on this leadership role. ANROWS has demonstrated a firm research foundation, giving confidence to stakeholders in its ability to grow and be even more successful. These factors mean that ANROWS is well positioned to take on this leadership role and play a broader role across the sector.

Critical to ANROWS taking on the role of a national research body is improving its ability to measure the impact of its research. There is a pressing need to develop new measures of success and data sources linked to impact and its new primary focus on policy makers and policy impact. This will provide ANROWS with the tools it needs to demonstrate

its value and increase transparency in the work that it chooses to undertake. It is acknowledged that this is a common challenge across the sector, however consultation participants expressed a desire for ANROWS to lead in this space and leverage its growing evaluation expertise and leadership to do so.

As ANROWS embarks on development of its 2020-23 Strategic Plan, it is vital that these points are considered. In doing so, ANROWS can build upon its achievements to date and create greater impact in the future.

Lead findings

Finding 1. ANROWS current value proposition is innately linked to its unique position as the only organisation of its kind with a sole purpose to produce evidence to address violence against women and children.

Finding 2. Delivery of ANROWS value proposition has been limited due to a lack of clarity on policy makers as their primary stakeholders and uncertainty of how to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders in setting and delivering research that is appropriate for a national research organisation.

Finding 3. Consultation with government and non-government stakeholders identified the importance of an organisation such as ANROWS and noted a strong desire for it to make a step-change and provide national leadership across the sector.

Finding 4. Comparisons to established national research institutes drew some parallels in terms of deep subject matter expertise but also opportunities, such as its role as a leader, policy broker and influencer within the sector.

Finding 5. ANROWS objects as per its constitution were found to be durable and relevant, and when compared to other national research organisations, reflective of the types of activities a national research body should conduct.

Finding 6. ANROWS Board needs to play a larger role in providing direction and clear advice to support ANROWS to achieve its objectives and strategy.

Finding 7. ANROWS has commissioned and produced a wide array of research, with over 60 research papers published, to build the evidence base, with an increasing focus on knowledge translation.

Finding 8. Its research program was found to favour qualitative research with 40% of its research purely qualitative and 50% of its research mixed methods.

Finding 9. Consultation participants noted a shift to program evaluation and research synthesis to understand “what works” to better inform policy decisions and program improvements was needed.

Finding 10. Some mechanisms exist to assess performance of ANROWS activities, such as its stakeholder engagement survey. However, these are not exhaustive or conclusive on all its activities.

Finding 11. ANROWS funders, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments noted they would benefit from a more meaningful relationship and dialogue with ANROWS outside of the National Plan Senior Officials (NPSO) forum.

Finding 12. ANROWS structure and processes are organised by its projects and the funding it receives from its grant agreements, owing to the vast majority of its funding being provided by government grants.

Lead recommendations

The following recommendations provide the core actions needed for ANROWS to build on its foundation and strengths to date, and pivot towards the attributes of a national research body.

Recommendation 1. ANROWS broadens its role to that of a best practice national research body, as defined by the review, and aligns its strategy and value proposition more closely to its objects set out in its constitution.

Recommendation 2. ¹ANROWS clarifies its primary stakeholders to be policy makers, to drive population wide impact, with practitioners a secondary audience.

Recommendation 3. ANROWS identifies and develops new measures of success, data sources and specific outcomes to better understand its impact.

Recommendation 4. Among other approaches, ANROWS broadens its capability to utilise innovative research methods, such as randomised trials and more quantitative analysis, to answer the question of “what works?”.

Recommendation 5. Roles and responsibilities of its board members and strategic intent are clarified, and new ways of working are established to encourage openness and constructive debate.

Recommendation 6. ANROWS adopts a functional model that aligns to its strategy, complementing its strong research expertise with leadership and stakeholder engagement functions.

Recommendation 7. Following adoption of a more flexible and agile operating model, ANROWS adopts a more proactive approach to responding to emerging issues.

It is key that ANROWS Commonwealth, state and territory funders, alongside its board, are included in these initiatives. This is so they may support and enable ANROWS to grow and contribute to developing an understanding of what is strategically important in the prevention of domestic and family violence in Australia.

¹ The review acknowledges that ANROWS has taken steps to pivot its stakeholder approach to place policy makers as its primary stakeholders following endorsement of its own Strategic Review in June 2020. As such changes are likely to be ongoing

and will take time to be embedded and experienced by stakeholders, the recommendation seeks to ensure this focus and impact is measured and reviewed in time.

1 Background

1.1 Background

ANROWS is an independent company limited by guarantee that is supported by the Commonwealth Government and all state and territory governments to undertake its work. Its funders, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, are members of the company and its stakeholders. The establishment of ANROWS as a National Centre of Excellence in 2013 was a signature commitment under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (National Plan).

ANROWS was created to fill the gap in producing, disseminating and assisting in the applying of evidence for policy and practice addressing violence against women and children. As such, ANROWS has a key role in delivering research on women's safety that is useful for the family and domestic violence sector as well as more broadly². Much of this research has been focused to practitioner needs and, to a lesser extent, policy makers. This is likely due to ANROWS building upon the work of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, which purposefully engaged practitioners in research.

Since establishment, ANROWS has produced research into domestic, family and sexual violence. With research spanning a myriad of topics, it has facilitated the creation of evidence into topics that other organisations would have been unlikely to do without specific focus.

It is one of the only organisations of its kind, domestically and internationally, to have a direct focus and specific funding to drive the creation of evidence into domestic, family and sexual violence.

² ANROWS Review RFQ, DSS (2020).

³ Refer to Figure 3-2.

1.1.1 ANROWS objectives and strategy

ANROWS mission is to deliver relevant and translatable research evidence which drives policy and practice, leading to a reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children. Every aspect of their work is motivated by the right of women and their children to live free from violence and in safe communities.

ANROWS objectives are set out in seven clear statements in its Constitution³ that provide specific activities for how ANROWS delivers this mission.

To achieve these objectives, ANROWS has adopted the following goals⁴, which are set out in its current strategic plan⁵.

- Deliver high quality, innovation and relevant research
- Ensure the effective dissemination and application of research findings
- Build, maintain and promote collaborative relationships with and between stakeholders
- Be an efficient, effective and accountable organisation.

1.1.2 National Plan infrastructure

The National Plan is the key policy commitment in the areas of domestic, family and sexual violence. It establishes the policy infrastructure and creates the ongoing stakeholder processes for dialogue and action.

The National Plan, as an initiative of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, provides ANROWS with significant backing, focus

⁴ ANROWS Three-Year Strategic Plan (2016-19).

⁵ Note: ANROWS is currently developing its 2020-23 strategic plan.

and authority in the way that it conducts its work. ANROWS can utilise this for its own efforts and also seek to influence the broader national agenda through engagement.

Under the National Plan, three-year action plans have been adopted that build upon each of the preceding action plans. The *Fourth Action Plan: Turning the Corner 2019-2022* is the final action plan in the series.

It sets out an 'ambitious but practical' agenda to achieve change, by:

- Improving existing initiatives
- Addressing the gaps in previous action plans
- Providing a platform for future policy to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence.

There are two years remaining of the Fourth Action Plan.

1.2 Rationale for the review

The Department engaged Deloitte to undertake an independent review of ANROWS. The review is foreshadowed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the states and territories concerning the operation of ANROWS. The review will focus on ANROWS performance and effectiveness to date, and how its focus, people and operations could best be positioned to operate as effectively as possible.

1.3 Approach for the review

The review was focused on ANROWS' performance and effectiveness to date, and how it can be best positioned to operate as effectively as possible including over the last two years of the National Plan.

Deloitte used a target operating model (TOM) approach to conduct the review. The TOM approach focuses on the different elements needed for an organisation to be effective and how these interact. For an organisation to function effectively, all elements need to work as effectively as each

other and in tandem, rather than in silos or opposition. This is important for small organisations, such as ANROWS, as any deficiencies in one area of the model can be easily felt in other areas. This can create conflicts and result in strain on how resources are used.

This approach allowed the review to focus on the individual elements of ANROWS operating model, but also how they work together to create a cohesive organisation. In doing so, the review was able to make tangible recommendations that can be actioned at the individual element level, but also more far-reaching recommendations which will have a broader impact on ANROWS as a whole.

The operating model framework used for the review was organised along three key dimensions:

1. **Value proposition:** is the value that an organisation delivers to its stakeholders
2. **Capabilities:** what capabilities are needed in what structure to support the delivery of the value proposition
3. **Enablers:** what processes are needed to enable these capabilities

Figure 1-1 Elements of ANROWS Target Operating Model that were reviewed



Source: Deloitte (2020).

1.4 Review criteria

A detailed terms of reference was used to guide the review.

The following focus areas for the review were outlined under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):

- The extent to which ANROWS is meeting the objects of the company as outlined in the Constitution;
- The usefulness of ANROWS output for jurisdictional policy and program development (including its use in, or impact on, related state and territory family violence outcomes frameworks).

Along with the MoU and following engagement with the states and territories, the following additional focus areas were determined, culminating the review terms of reference:

Value proposition

- a the durability and relevance of ANROWS objectives
- b the effectiveness of priority setting
- c the extent to which other stakeholders (Government and the family violence sector) priorities are aligned with ANROWS work (and approaches that would support a strong alignment)
- d the usefulness of ANROWS output for jurisdictional policy and program development
- e examples of best practice in similar organisations in Australia and internationally and, more generally, the connections ANROWS has with other organisations
- f the perception of ANROWS role in the domestic and family violence landscape in Australia, including the volume and quality of research, and how that compares to that of its stakeholders
- g achievements to date in delivering to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

Capabilities

- h the effectiveness of ANROWS governance (including the Board and internal processes) in enabling decision making aligned to its objectives, now and into the future

- i the suitability of operating models, including the breadth and appropriateness of strategies used to support research
- j whether current capabilities and staff resourcing profiles are appropriate and aligned to the new and emerging research and operational priorities
- k its ability to effectively utilise funding to achieve its objectives and how its operations and functions are set up to support that
- l broad consideration of the resourcing impact of any adjustment to the current approach

Enablers

- m whether the process for identifying research priorities is effective (i.e. efficient, appropriate and delivers the intended outcome)
- n the approach to research production and knowledge dissemination, and whether other mechanisms exist beyond current methods.

1.5 Stakeholder engagement

Underpinning the review was extensive stakeholder engagement, with representation across the jurisdictions and government and non-government sectors.

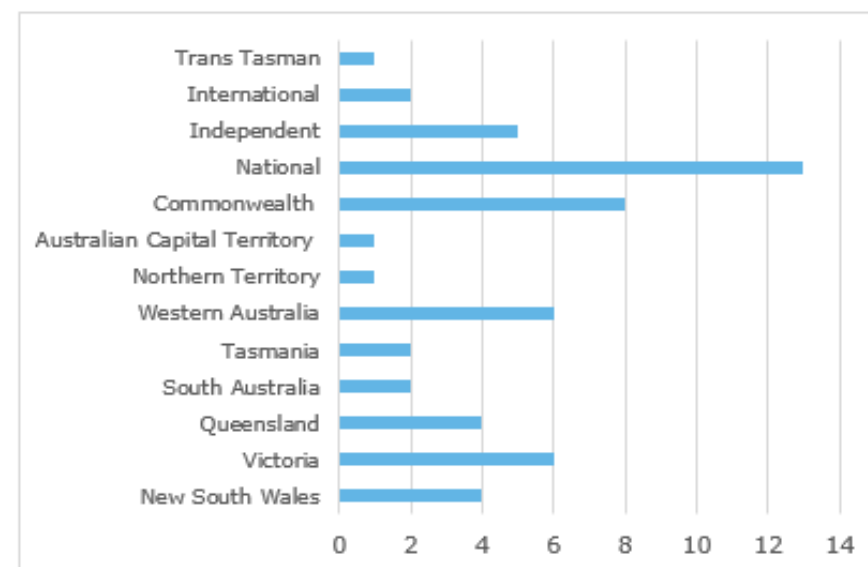
The review involved extensive stakeholder engagement and data gathering activities, comprising:

- An examination of relevant organisational documentation provided by stakeholders
- Consultation with the ANROWS Board and its senior leadership team
- Consultation with the National Plan Implementation Executive Group (ImpEG) and NPSO
- Consultation with researchers who have and haven't worked with ANROWS
- Consultation with policy makers and practitioners
- Consultation with similar or like research and data institutions from a benchmarking perspective

The review undertook 58 consultations with 64 individuals.

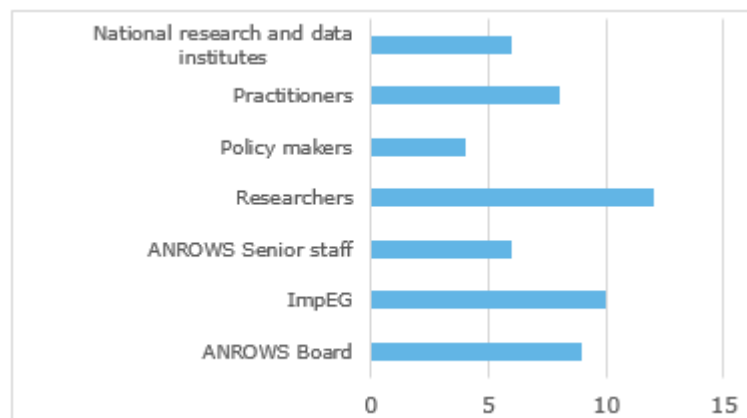
Figure 1-2 (below) shows the distribution of consultations across Australian jurisdictions. Figure 1-3 (below) shows the distribution of consultations across stakeholder groups.

Figure 1-2 Consultations across jurisdiction



Source: Deloitte (2020).

Figure 1-3 Consultations across stakeholder groups



Source: Deloitte (2020).

Participants were guaranteed anonymity for their participation and, as such, while their views and responses have been used throughout the report, these are not attributable to any one individual.

1.6 Structure of this report

The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- **Sections 2 to 7:** summary of findings and recommendations by operating model element
- **Appendix:** a summary of the stakeholders consulted as part of the review, and a summary of the review's overall findings and recommendations.

2 Value proposition

2.1 About this section

This section of the report will examine the aspects that help to define an organisations' value proposition. It will examine whether ANROWS current value proposition reflects its position within the sector and the impact it strives to achieve.

In doing so, this section will consider the following review questions outlined in the MoU:

- The extent to which ANROWS is meeting the objects of the company as outlined in the Constitution
- The usefulness of ANROWS output for jurisdictional policy and program development (including its use in, or impact on, related state and territory family violence outcomes frameworks)

Why it matters

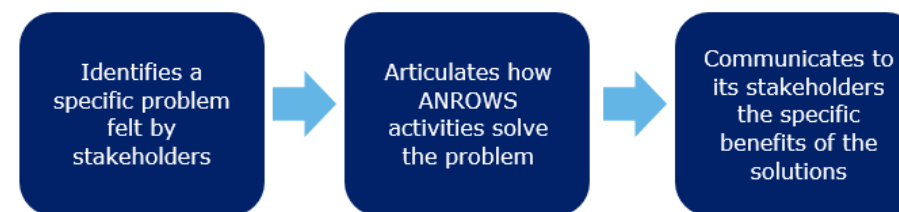
A value proposition describes the problem that an organisation aims to solve, how its solution is unique and the benefits it provides to its stakeholders. It is an important mechanism for understanding the benefits stakeholders will receive from the output or work of an organisation.

A compelling value proposition will come from continually understanding stakeholders and their changing needs, and so it is a helpful mechanism to test with stakeholders to understand whether an organisation is effectively achieving this.

2.2 Defining a value proposition

A value proposition is a proactive and regular consideration of the following three components (below). Value propositions can be written down and are often included in marketing materials or communication with stakeholders. However, a value proposition is better understood as a process than a product. A compelling value proposition will come from continually understanding stakeholders and their changing needs.

Figure 2-1 Definition of a value proposition



Source: Deloitte (2020).

After understanding stakeholder needs, an organisation should continually assess how its activities meet those needs. This includes understanding what other organisations or competitors do and how the organisation differentiates its work, fills gaps or uniquely enhances those activities. Finally, stakeholders need to understand how they will benefit, and whether it is worth having their problem met in the way that the organisation proposes.

Therefore, a strong value proposition is intrinsic to stakeholder trust, and requires that an organisation delivers the value it states it will. The review

sought to understand ANROWS value proposition and how well it delivered on it within the context of its operating environment and the funding it receives from the Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

The review found that ANROWS being able to articulate a strong value proposition, that was relevant for today and the future, was important to clarifying its ongoing focus and strategy. The review heard that getting the value proposition right would clarify the organisational structure and capabilities that are needed to enable this, which are discussed in Sections 6 and 7.

2.3 ANROWS' value proposition

Current value proposition:

ANROWS describes itself as an independent, not-for-profit research organisation established to produce evidence to support the reduction of violence against women and their children. How it differentiates its work from other research or academic organisations is unclear, as are its benefits to its stakeholders. Although its mission does suggest it delivers benefit through relevant and translatable research evidence which drives policy and practice leading to a reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children.

To consider ANROWS value proposition and how it was currently delivering on it, the review sought to reflect on the three elements of a value proposition.

Clarifying stakeholder's problems:

ANROWS was established in response to a strong signal from stakeholders that the lack of national research into domestic, family and sexual violence was impacting on progressing our ability to address violence against women and their children. This review has found there has been some confusion on whether ANROWS has delivered on its value proposition largely because of a lack of consensus on which stakeholders are most

critical for ANROWS to service and how they might be expected to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders.

In particular, the role and focus that ANROWS should have on practitioners has been debated. For example, ANROWS maintains a Practitioner Engagement Group (PEG), a piece of its original infrastructure from ANROWS' inception in building upon the work of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, which purposefully engaged practitioners in research. While PEG has served well in supporting the take-up of evidence in practice, ANROWS has acknowledged that a more strategic engagement is needed to better meet the needs of stakeholders and more effectively manage competing stakeholder demands. As such, ANROWS will be focusing its engagement with national bodies who can drive systems-wide practice design and will provide important feedback on the implementation of policy as well as insights to inform future policy directions.

During this review, and a Board-initiated internal strategic review⁶, it has been made clear that ANROWS best delivers value by focusing on the needs of policy makers as their primary stakeholders, shareholders and funders. ANROWS can then better use its limited resources to target its research activities towards projects that have a direct impact on policy decisions, which, in turn, will drive a population level impact. This will provide greater value to its government funders who are also the members of the ANROWS company.

The review found that this prime focus on policy makers had not been clearly stated or delivered in the past and that proactive focus on the specific research needs of policy makers in the future would be considered of most value. There has been a suggestion that ANROWS should have understood its role. However, it is also clear that key feedback loops, including the Board and the NPSO network, have not been able to effectively raise these issues.

⁶ Port Jackson Partners 2020 Strategic Review

The review also notes that there are other important stakeholder groups, including practitioners and researchers. These groups have their own specific needs. These were often communicated to the review in terms of providing opportunities for funding to explore interesting research questions, support capability uplift within frontline services, researcher careers or employ different or experimental methodologies. These are important considerations. However, these needs should be considered only to the extent that they also meet the needs of policy makers. The review found examples where ANROWS activities and choices of research projects suggested that it had prioritised researcher or practitioner needs.

A solution to fit the problem:

Given there has not been clarity on the key stakeholder focus for ANROWS, the research and activities output of ANROWS has been broad and demonstrates a desire from ANROWS to meet the needs of a variety of different stakeholders. In doing so, the review finds that it has been hardworking but diluted its impact. Additionally, ANROWS has not capitalised on the unique position it has as a government-backed national research body with specific focus and funding in domestic, family and sexual violence. This unique position not only affords it focus on a national scale, but also the opportunity to leverage this scale to fund multi-disciplinary or highly specialised extensive research that academic institutions would struggle to find viable. Without ANROWS, some of its research might never have come into being.

Communicating benefits:

ANROWS undertakes several communication and stakeholder engagement activities and approaches that can be seen to communicate the benefit they provide to stakeholders. However, these have been less impactful because of the lack of consensus on the key stakeholder issues that need to be met. These activities are explored in Section 1.

Summary - Value proposition requires stakeholder clarity:

The review found that although ANROWS does have important value propositions for a variety of stakeholders, its delivery of this has undervalued the unique position and impact it can have in solving national policy problems. A value proposition must start from a clear understanding of its stakeholders, as well as an understanding of which stakeholder's needs are most important given an organisation's focus and the context in which it works.

Given policy makers are intended to be the primary stakeholder group, it is important that ANROWS now pivots itself to deliver maximum value to this group. Since the primary objective of policy makers is to create policy that delivers on the National Plan, ANROWS value proposition, and therefore its activities, should contribute to the achievement of the National Plan's objectives.

Therefore, ANROWS value proposition for the future must consider how it provides research and evidence to solve national policy problems related to the reduction in violence against women in its capacity as a national research body.

To better understand how ANROWS can deliver value, the review sought to understand the role of a national research body to identify the specific activities a research organisation should undertake to provide the solution its stakeholders need. This is set out in the following Section 2.4.

2.4 The value and role of national research bodies

2.4.1 Role of national research bodies

The definition and nature of national research bodies varies widely in Australia and internationally. Without an existing applicable standard, the review sought to understand the common and most sought-after characteristics amongst research bodies and the specific expectations of ANROWS' stakeholders. To inform this, the review included interviews with several leading Australian and international research and data institutes,

and a review of publicly available information of research bodies. A list of the institutes and participants consulted is set out in Appendix A.

Based on this information, the review established the key attributes that were found to characterise a national research body and that were applicable to ANROWS. These are set out in Table 2-9.

The value and activities that ANROWS currently delivers was considered against these attributes. This provides clarity on the performance of ANROWS now, and how ANROWS should pivot to grow and increase its impact in a way that is valuable to its key stakeholder group. Figure 2-2, provides the key attributes that were found to characterise a national research body and were applicable to ANROWS.

Figure 2-2 Attributes of a national research body applicable to ANROWS

	Bold aspiration and clear strategy to impact A bold aspiration that brings focus and distinction to the organisations work. This should include a clear strategy for creating impact in the community.
	Policy and knowledge brokerage Continuous engagement and integration with policy makers and other stakeholders, including researchers and practitioners to provide a policy lens and facilitate knowledge exchange and sharing.
	Research leadership Ability to lead the conversation on the critical questions that research needs to answer, with a focus on emerging trends to ensure agenda remains relevant and forward-thinking.
	Research transparency A level of transparency of how and why research is conducted that instils trust in the people that consume the research, providing them with the data to make informed choices irrespective of an organisations structure or funding relationships.
	Research coalitions Strong coalitions with other national and international bodies to create scale and bring together diverse capabilities and expertise.
	Research excellence High standard of research quality and integrity that is supported by an intersectional approach and researchers who strive to make impact.
	Mechanism to measure impact Ability to respond and meet societal needs, by measuring the impact of research to determine what is and isn't working; and use this data to constantly evolve the approach and ensure resources are driven into the right areas.

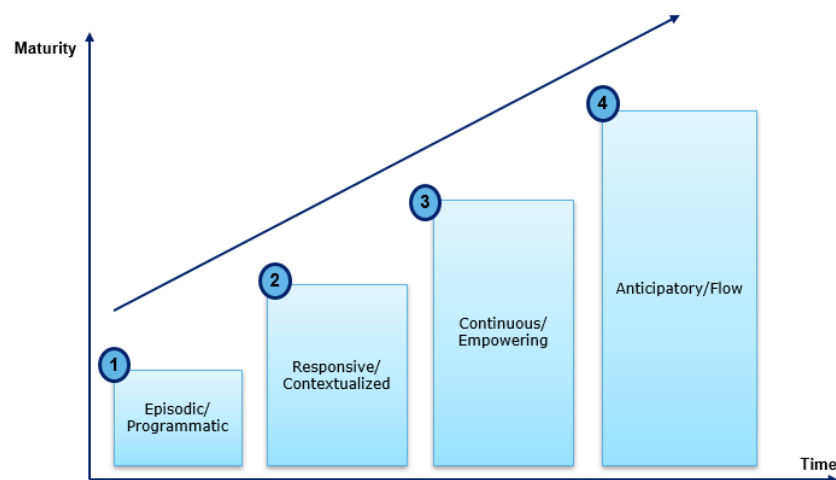
Source: Deloitte, Stakeholder consultations, see Appendix A.

The ambitious role of research organisations:

These attributes set out the ambitious and important role of national research organisations, which can support a unique value proposition. Only a national research organisation is empowered to play this role. However, the review recognises that executing on these attributes is complex and requires specific resources and capabilities. In addition, the review recognises that many of the institutes we consulted with acknowledged they still had some progress to make in truly achieving their ambitions.

The review also noted that fulfilling this ambitious role also depended on the organisational maturity. At seven years old, the review considers that ANROWS is at a pivotal moment in its maturity, characterised as responsive and contextualised, or stage two, as illustrated in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3 Maturity model



Source: Deloitte (2020)

The role of capacity building was also considered. The institutes also recommended that the research community would benefit from greater sharing and capacity building between themselves and more broadly

across the sector. This was echoed by the states and territories, however, sector capacity building was not considered ANROWS core purpose and should not be funded through its core grant. The review found ANROWS currently undertakes capability building projects as part of its “Action Research & Evaluation” initiative. These initiatives are funded outside of the core grant and seek to assist organisations by providing guidance and support to create robust research and evaluation methodologies to influence future practice and contribute to the evidence base.

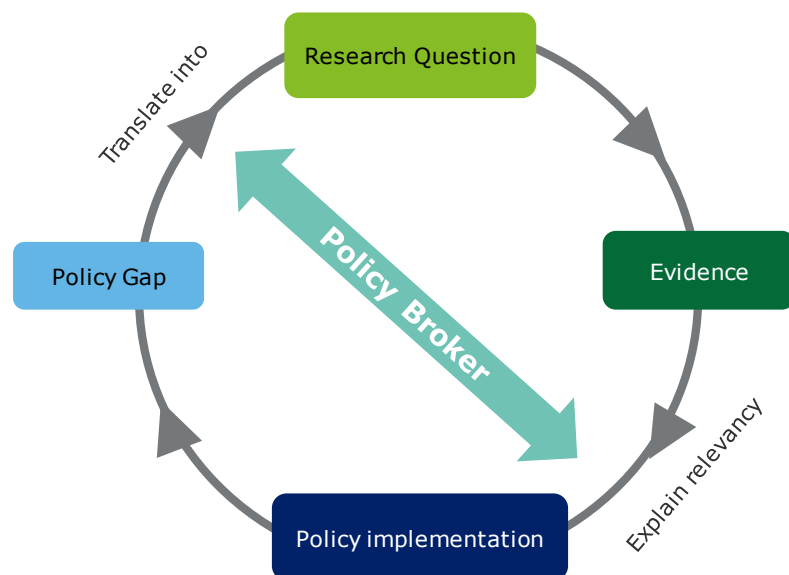
Research and policy brokerage:

Attributes or functions such as advocacy or direct advice to the public were also shared as attributes of research organisations. However, the review found these to be not as applicable to ANROWS, and more suited to its other National Plan Partners such as 1800RESPECT and Our Watch or peak bodies.

This is an important distinction to make, as although ANROWS is a company owned by governments, it is apolitical as it is not funded by any one party. This provides a level of research transparency for ANROWS, as it is not required to implement or align to a particular policy, but rather has research freedom. This results in synthesis and provision of evidence which highlights the key issues and mechanisms which can then inform policy and practice.

Consultation participants identified this as the policy brokerage role. This means that ANROWS and other research institutes use their skills to use their knowledge of the evidence base to help policy makers understand the true research and policy questions that need to be answered. Additionally, the subsequent knowledge translation that occurs is essential to drive a meaningful impact.

Figure 2-4 Policy brokerage model



Source: Deloitte (2020), stakeholder consultations, see Appendix A.

2.4.2 ANROWS as a national research body

Figure 2-5 provides an indication of where ANROWS is demonstrating attributes of a national research body, as defined by the seven attributes explored in Section 2.4.1, and where further opportunities exist for progression. These opportunities will be further explored in subsequent sections of the report.

Figure 2-5 Opportunities for ANROWS to increase its maturity as a national research body

Attribute	Examples where ANROWS displays these characteristics	Opportunities for the future
Bold aspiration and clear strategy to impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANROWS has a clear mission, to deliver relevant and translatable research evidence that drives policy and practice leading to a reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalise on the authority that ANROWS has been given through the National Plan to be the undisputed research leader and the go to organisation for evidence on what works in the areas of domestic, family and sexual violence. The development of a clearly defined value proposition that is continually refined and emphasises ANROWS unique position as the sole research body with a specific domestic, family and sexual violence focus ANROWS strategy for impact has been muddled by its tendency to try and meet the expectations of a vast array of stakeholders. ANROWS should focus on those it can create most impact through, which are its funders; policy makers.
Research leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apart from the Australian Research Council (ARC) and NHMRC, ANROWS is the only other Category 1 funder in the domestic, family and sexual violence space⁷. While consultation participants noted it was not seen in the same esteem as a Category 1 grant from the ARC or NHMRC, it was considered as an attractive proposition for researchers, allowing ANROWS to attract highly regarded and experienced researchers to lead and contribute to its research. Alignment to National Plan priorities, to demonstrate its relevance and significance within the sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and maintenance of a publicly available national research agenda to better inform priorities across the sector, and ensure resources are collectively utilised. The review acknowledges an updated national research agenda was released on 20 October 2020. It will be important to focus on embedding and prompting the agenda as well as measurement of its impact and recognition that ANROWS maintenance of the agenda is still ongoing. Conducting of systematic reviews and creation of evidence gap maps, to understand the areas that require primary research and funding, as well as those, that need further analysis to surface findings and evaluate “what works”. The review acknowledges a “what works” initiative is underway as part of the recent Fourth Action Plan research program. Continue to seek nationally significant collaborations, partnerships and additional funding to meet the breadth of research needs of their stakeholders

⁷ Due to its funding being provided on a nationally competitive basis, and its selection process being competitive, transparent and supported by a qualified panel.

Attribute	Examples where ANROWS displays these characteristics	Opportunities for the future
Research transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANROWS is currently constituted as an independent company limited by guarantee. Its board helps set and govern its strategy and it is empowered to create and lead a national research agenda in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase transparency through robust priority setting and the national research agenda, so that it is evident how research priorities are set, and what they hope to achieve. Leverage this transparency to drive investment in research by other funders (including research bodies such as ARC and NHMRC, philanthropic, corporate and other private funders).
Policy and knowledge brokerage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANROWS convenes the National Plan Senior Officials (NPSOs) group to gain input from the Commonwealth, state and territory government officials. Held quarterly via teleconference this gives ANROWS an insight into topics of interest. ANROWS manages a Practitioner Engagement Group (PEG), a network of practice leaders who help ANROWS facilitate the translation and exchange of research evidence to practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uplift of capability within the team to foster both policy and knowledge brokering skills such as stakeholder engagement, influencing and an understanding of the policy context and how ANROWS fits within this. Commitment to forming research coalitions to build a bank of trusted knowledge for easier knowledge brokerage. Recruitment of internal researchers who can facilitate policy brokerage and possess stakeholder engagement skills to invest time in making their research policy relevant. Creation of a stakeholder engagement strategy that puts policy makers, as shareholders, at the centre and drives targeted engagement throughout all levels of the organisation. The review acknowledges that ANROWS has drafted a strategy.
Research coalitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANROWS has begun working more closely with the ABS to help shape their Personal Safety Survey (PSS) with reference to questions related to domestic, sexual and family violence. The growing relationship provides the ABS with subject matter expertise and ANROWS the opportunity to source comprehensive national data through the survey to support their research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of long-term coalitions with organisations whom ANROWS can leverage their resources and expertise to create long-term value (e.g. AIFS).
Research excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some researchers identified that because ANROWS staff were researchers they understood the research process and were able to provide useful input while managing the research. ANROWS' focus on disseminating its research in easy to use formats over the last few years demonstrates an ability to evolve their understanding of excellence in research and a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of more diverse research methods, including those with a quantitative focus. A shift in mindset and the setting of success measures that speak to the outcomes and effectiveness of research, rather than just its delivery

Attribute	Examples where ANROWS displays these characteristics	Opportunities for the future
	<p>desire to ensure that research is understood and has an impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more outcomes focused approach to underpin its research processes, and drive impact through its research and attract new and diverse researchers.
<p>Mechanism to measure impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANROWS Stakeholder Survey provides a snapshot of the usefulness and impact its research is having to those who complete the survey. Opportunities for its improvement are outlined in Section 3.2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of a set of measurable success criteria so that ANROWS may measure its effectiveness against its constitution and overarching strategy.

Source: Stakeholder consultations, see Appendix A, ANROWS Annual Report (2018-19) and ANROWS Project Register (2020).

2.5 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. Delivery of ANROWS value proposition has been limited due to:
 - a. a lack of clarity on policy makers as their primary stakeholder;
 - b. in setting and delivering research that is appropriate for a national research organisation; and
 - c. a lack of clarity on stakeholder issues and ability to communicate its benefit.
2. Consultation participants identified the importance of an organisation like ANROWS and the commitment from the government to fund such an organisation.

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Pivots its value proposition to meeting the needs of policy makers and leverages its unique position as a national research institute by embedding the attributes listed above⁸.

⁸ The review acknowledges an updated national research agenda was released on 20 October 2020. It will be important to focus on embedding and prompting the

agenda, as well as measurement of its impact and recognition that ANROWS maintenance of the agenda is still ongoing.

3 Strategy and funding

3.1 About this section

This section reports on the strategy and funding mechanisms that ANROWS has in place to create value for its stakeholders. This section also looks at ANROWS ability to effectively set priorities.

Specifically, this section will address the following review terms of reference:

- the durability and relevance of ANROWS objectives (a)
- the effectiveness of priority setting (b)
- whether the process for identifying research priorities is effective (i.e. efficient, appropriate and delivers the intended outcome) (m)
- its ability to effectively utilise its funding to achieve its objectives (k)

Why it matters

Value proposition is about how an organisation delivers value to stakeholders. How that value is identified and communicated is determined through an organisation's strategy, which pinpoints the choices it is making and how it will deliver on commitments. ANROWS can improve in making this link between the two, and must do so if it is to grow and remain relevant within the sector.

Funding is a concrete example of what stakeholders value and are prepared to pay for. Funders can be a barometer in relation to an organisation's value proposition. ANROWS use of funding is largely focused on research, and it generated new sources of funding, indicating stakeholders do see value in the work they deliver. This should give it the confidence to seek out further opportunities to create value within the sector.

Figure 3-1 ANROWS Strategy (2016-19)

Vision			
To be an innovative research organisation with authoritative leadership and high impact to support the National Plan			
Our Mission			
To deliver relevant research evidence which drives policy and practice leading to a reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children			
Goal 1 Deliver high quality, innovative and relevant research	Goal 2 Ensure the effective dissemination and application of research findings	Goal 3 Build, maintain and promote collaborative relationships with & between stakeholders	Goal 4 Be an efficient, effective and accountable organisation
1.1 Developing, leading and prompting the National Research Agenda as endorsed by Ministers and other stakeholders. 1.2 Managing a research program in agreed priority areas to support the National Research Agenda and the National Plan. 1.3 Increasing the volume and quality of research into domestic and family violence and sexual assault. 1.4 Establishing and adhering to research processes that are open, transparent and efficient. 1.5 Ensuring ongoing stakeholder consultation and involvement in ANROWS research activities and decision-making processes. 1.6 Drawing on the expertise of researchers and research organisations to ensure that funded research meets high standards of intellectual and methodological rigour.	2.1 Employing innovative, targeted communication strategies that are fit-for-purpose to disseminate national and international research on domestic and family violence and sexual assault. 2.2 Establishing and maintaining mechanisms to facilitate the uptake of evidence to change policy and practice. 2.3 Adapting, tailoring and packaging evidence for a variety of users to increase accessibility and uptake. 2.4 Monitoring and evaluating the impact of ANROWS evidence on policy and practice. 2.5 Integrating results of monitoring and evaluation into future engagement strategies to enhance the impact of ANROWS research findings. 2.6 Leading knowledge translation and application in theory and practice in the violence against women field.	3.1 Developing an engagement strategy which facilitates effective relationships with all funders and key stakeholders. 3.2 Establishing and maintaining effective collaborations between researchers and research users, to reflect on and learn how to research can continue to have a positive impact on policy and practice. 3.3 Taking the lead in monitoring and disseminating information about national and international developments in the fields of domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault through the use of a wide range of communication methods. 3.4 Identifying areas of future collaboration between researchers, policy makers and practitioners.	4.1 Maintaining high standards of governance and financial accountability. 4.2 Reporting regularly to the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments as our principal funder. 4.3 Striving for continuous improvement in our organisational practices. 4.4 Seeking to diversify our funding sources through the development of new partnerships and collaborations.

Source: ANROWS Strategy (2016-19)

3.2 ANROWS strategy

Are ANROWS objectives durable and relevant?

3.2.1 ANROWS objectives

ANROWS' objectives were established as part of its creation and embedded within its Constitution. ANROWS constitution⁹ sets out seven activities it should carry out, as shown in Figure 3-2.

ANROWS has created an operational strategic plan to give effect to these objectives. ANROWS three-year strategic plan (2016-19)¹⁰ defines its vision as "to be an innovative research organisation with authoritative leadership and high impact to support the National Plan". The strategy also articulates ANROWS' Mission as "to deliver relevant and translatable research evidence which drives policy and practice leading to a reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children. Four goals are set out as strategic priority areas.

The review found it is not uncommon for many organisations such as ANROWS, who are funded by government and has governments as members of its company, to have a Constitution or body of law, such as an Act, to outline their main functions and governance mechanisms. Additionally, it is not uncommon for these organisations to develop operational strategies to provide direction and focus over a specific time period. For example, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), was established under the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987*¹¹ and has a separate strategy that provides detail on how its actions meet its objectives.

⁹ ANROWS Constitution (2017)

¹⁰ Note: ANROWS is currently undergoing work to develop a new 2020-23 strategic plan

Figure 3-2 ANROWS Objects as per its Constitution

ANROWS Objects

1. facilitating research that:
 - a. develops and expands the understanding of domestic and family violence and sexual assault as specific forms of violence against women; and
 - b. identifies measures and interventions that
 - i. prevent violence against women
 - ii. stop re-offending
 - iii. promote the best interests of women and their children; and
 - iv. enable recovery from domestic and family violence and sexual assault;
2. promoting the development of evidence that drives action to reduce violence against women and their children by:
 - a. leading the development of national research into domestic and family violence and sexual assault that creates an evidence base that can influence government policy, programs and practice;
 - b. analysing and recommending ways to improve service delivery across the assault sector; and
 - c. analysing and recommending evidence-based actions that prevent domestic and family violence and sexual assault;
3. developing and promoting a national research agenda in consultation with all governments across Australia;
4. commissioning and supporting research to improve the volume and quality of research into domestic and family violence and sexual assault;
5. ensuring relevant research and evidence is widely disseminated;
6. providing authoritative commentary relating to the evidence base;

¹¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019).

-
7. keeping across international developments in the fields of domestic and family violence and sexual assault and disseminating or utilising as appropriate.
-

The review found alignment between ANROWS strategy and its Constitution in most areas, with the exception of objects [6] and [7], which were not explicitly included in ANROWS goals. However, one of its goals [2.1]¹² is “employing innovative, targeted communication strategies that are fit-for-purpose to disseminate national and international research on domestic and family violence and sexual assault”, and so it may be implied this includes taking an authoritative approach through its communication strategies.

The review also found that ANROWS goals could be clearer and able to be achieved. A common approach to goal setting is the SMART approach, which is an acronym where each letter provides criteria for how to set goals.



By way of example, ANROWS first goal, [1.1] Developing, leading and promoting the National Research Agenda as endorsed by Ministers and other stakeholders and compare it to the criteria of the acronym; it can be said to be:

- not specific enough in what the National Research Agenda is, and who the “other” stakeholders might be to endorse it
- unclear in terms of measurement and what good might constitute
- difficult to achieve, as there is little specificity to understand what constitutes a research agenda, or promotion of it

- relevant, based on the idea of what a “national research agenda” is, although with limited specificity this might not meet the expectation of all its stakeholders
- not time bound, which makes it difficult to ascertain when this goal will need to be achieved by, or the frequency that this should be delivered. For instance, would completion of this goal be promotion of the agenda once within the strategic period.

Testing the goal against the SMART acronym demonstrates that the goal can be interpreted in many ways. This can provide flexibility for ANROWS but also means there is no clear consensus on what is required to achieve (and evidence achievement of) the goal. This review has found this is likely to be ineffective from an operational perspective, with staff on the ground unsure of what is required of them and too ineffective at the board level, with directors unable to reference clear measures to hold the CEO accountable. The review repeatedly heard from ANROWS Board, staff and funders that greater clarity on ANROWS strategy would be beneficial.

3.2.2 Durability and relevance

ANROWS’ objectives can be considered durable and relevant; in that they provide a firm foundation for activities that would befit a national research organisation. They also include activities that are unique to ANROWS as a research body with a sole focus on research that addresses violence against women and their children, providing ANROWS with a point of difference compared to other research or academic institutes could be considered its competitors. Ultimately, as there continues to be a high prevalence of domestic, family and sexual violence within our community, there will continue to be a need for such a focused body that can provide evidence, which other institutions might struggle to fund, to combat this critical issue.

However, the review found ANROWS objectives have not been translated into an operational strategy that clearly sets out ANROWS’ value proposition in specific goals and performance measures.

¹² ANROWS Three-Year Strategic Plan (2016-19).

Therefore, the review came back to the importance of ANROWS having clear performance measures.

The review therefore recommends that ANROWS revisits its strategy, guided by the definition of a role of a national research body, and what makes ANROWS unique within this context. Any strategy that ANROWS creates should be specific, with a measurement framework in place that allows it to measure outcomes and impact to its stakeholders and within the community. This should also make its reporting mechanisms more focused, providing the team with a useful mechanism to track progress and impact.

It is suggested that this process is led by the Board and could include stakeholders from the research institutes consulted as part of the review. This will allow the Board and ANROWS leadership team to leverage the learnings from these organisations who work within similar bounds of ANROWS as a national research institution, have a Company structure and have already embarked on this journey.

3.2.3 Performance measurement

Performance measurement is a key process for regularly considering the durability and relevance of an organisation's objectives. It establishes a logical approach to measuring the impact of the organisation's activities and detailing the evidence or measures that will be used to demonstrate positive performance.

The review acknowledges that research impact, particularly in the area of social policy, is complex. Consultation participants from other Australian and international research and data institutes noted the difficulty in being able to draw a clear link between research and impact. Despite this, many institutes spoke of evolving their thinking as their organisations matured to create frameworks that communicated a logical link between their activities with outcomes and impacts. This was seen to be important from multiple dimensions. Internally, so that organisations could understand

how they were tracking against their objectives, and whether course corrections or changes in approach were needed. As well as externally, to communicate the value the institute was delivering, and for others to be able to articulate this as the organisation's value proposition.

Research found the Australian Institute for Family Studies (AIFS), has recently refreshed its approach to performance measurement, with the advent of a performance measurement framework to link inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts against their strategic goals. As set out in Figure 3-3, it sets out a clear framework to show how what they do leads to products that create value and eventual impact in the community.

Figure 3-3 AIFS Performance measurement program logic¹³

Inputs	are our resources, staff and assets.
Activities	are what we do on a day-to-day basis.
Outputs	are the products, resources and organisational practices produced as a consequence of these activities
Outcomes	are the results we wish to see as a consequence of our activities and outputs, namely: our research is sought out by our stakeholders; our research is seen as relevant by our stakeholders; and our organisational capabilities support our research activities.
Impact	refers to the consequences of stakeholders seeking out and valuing our work, namely: better understanding among stakeholders of issues affecting families; improved capacity to use research; and deeper insights about what works in policy and practice to support families.

¹³ AIFS Corporate Plan (2019).

Source: AIFS Agency Plan (2019)

Formal measurement of ANROWS strategy and objectives is not as cohesive, with no specific performance measurement framework in place to enable this. However, ANROWS does have other means by which it regularly reports on its activities, as set out in Figure 3-4 (below).

Figure 3-4 Regular reporting mechanisms

Reporting mechanism	Description	Frequency
ANROWS Annual Report	An annual report shared publicly with an outline of ANROWS operations and delivery over the year. It also includes a breakdown of its financial statements for transparency purposes.	Yearly
Stakeholder engagement survey	A survey that invites participants to share feedback on the usefulness and reach of ANROWS research, publications, resources, communications and stakeholder engagement activities.	Yearly
Activity Work Plan	Progress reports with updates on activity to date, and risks to completion of agreed activities under its grant agreements. Report is monitored by the grant funder.	Approx. every 3 months
Research progress report 1	Completed by researchers to provide a summary of progress to date, status of project in tracking to agreed milestone, Statement of Knowledge review and copy of ethics application (if applicable).	Once per project, timing agreed in contract
Research progress report 2	Completed by researchers to provide a summary of progress to date, evidence of ethics approval and KTE plan	Once per project, timing agreed in contract

Final research report assessments	An assessment of the final research report with feedback from peer review and internal reviews, on the content, design and research rigour of the project.	Completion of every research project
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Source: Deloitte (2020).

With the exception of the Annual Report, which provides an anecdotal record of its achievements, these mechanisms did not have a direct link to understanding ANROWS achievement against its strategy or its objectives set out in its Constitution.

These mechanisms also tended to focus on outputs and less so on the outcome and impact of the work the reporting mechanism might be focused on. Where outcomes were provided, such as its activity work plan attached to its Fourth Action Plan grant agreement, they were not always supported by strong measures or performance indicators to understand what would constitute achievement of the outcome. For example, one of the intended outcomes listed is to “deliver high quality, innovative, relevant and translatable research evidence that drives policy and practice.” The lack of measures means that what constitutes “high-quality”, “innovative”, “relevant” or “translatable” research is unclear and could be interpreted differently by different audiences.

However, the review did find its stakeholder engagement survey does attempt to capture feedback on the outcomes and impact of its work with focused questions on how its research had been used to inform policy or practice. In the 2019 survey, 70% of respondents noted they had used ANROWS research to inform policy and practice (319 participants completed the survey), with 135 participants providing examples such as “we used prioritising victim/survivor safety in Australian perpetrator interventions to rethink our PC [partner contact] interventions and lift their relevance.”

While the review notes the thoroughness and audience of the survey is unknown owing to its wide distribution via its website and newsletter, it does provide ANROWS with a useful indication of the impact of its work. It is suggested that ANROWS looks to further refine the survey with thought

to how it can seek to understand links between its work and delivery on the National Plan, and more targeted responses from policy makers as a key stakeholder. Presentation of the results segmented by audience might also be helpful in understanding who ANROWS work is having the most impact on, as well as any gaps in responses from particular stakeholder groups of interest.

3.2.4 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. ANROWS objectives are durable and relevant.
2. ANROWS has created its own operational strategic plan to provide further direction and purpose to its objectives.
3. There is an absence of clear performance measures for ANROWS to measure achievement against its objectives or strategy.

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Create a clearer set of strategic goals, which are measurable, specific and time bound.
2. Sets clear performance measures and metrics to show how it is achieving against its strategy and objectives.

3.3 Priority setting

Is priority setting, including the process, effective?

3.3.1 Good practice in priority setting

Priority setting is a term that is used for the approach and process for deciding what activities should be carried out. In ANROWS' case, priority setting focuses on determining family, domestic and sexual violence research priorities. However, it is worth pointing out that research priority setting occurs at different levels. For example, research priorities set at a national level focus on national gaps and opportunities. Alternatively, those considered within an individual project or grant might involve research priorities set based on the topic, methodology, population specificity of the research or researcher experience.

There is no specific good practice identified in priority setting in the human services field that directly relates to domestic and family violence prevention. However, there is significant practice and learning in the health field that sets out an effective priority setting process that can be leveraged.

Regardless of the level of research priority setting, an effective process should¹⁴:

- **Clarify the context** – i.e. Identify the purpose, scope and timeframe of the priority setting process. Consider the policy and organisational environment in which the priority setting takes place
- **Involve stakeholders** – i.e. stakeholder groups to involve funders, researchers, policy makers, practitioners and non-government organisations, as well as people with lived experience of the topics
- **Be evidence informed** – i.e. compile information and data that enables an understanding of what exists, the gaps, stakeholder views etc.

- **Set criteria** to provide transparency and focus – i.e. criteria should articulate what is most important. These should be bespoke to the research area but are likely to include criteria that address gaps in knowledge, build upon existing knowledge, etc. it is also likely that criteria included will enable policy decisions to be made, ability to scale, return on investment, and feasibility.
- **Agree decision making process** – i.e. consider different methods for arriving at priorities taking into account expertise on evidence and balancing different stakeholder views
- **Communicate** priorities – i.e. priority setting aims to engage stakeholders, and specific communication methods should be implemented to ensure that all stakeholders understand the priorities that have been set and why.
- **Review and update** priorities - i.e. priority setting - is an ongoing process that requires some flexibility to ensure that research is relevant and current. The priority setting process should also be evaluated to consider whether it resulted in effective priorities that met the agreed purpose and how influential it was in guiding research investment.

A priority setting process should result in priorities that are more specific than general themes or topics.

For example, a research topic may be "Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrators", but a research priority should identify:

- What needs to be known about perpetrators (i.e. what is already known and what is the gap)
- Which perpetrators (i.e. is it a particular sub-group) should be prioritised
- What aspect or behaviour of perpetrators should be considered
- Whether research is feasible

The PICO framework, available in Appendix C, is used in the health field to provide a level of specificity around a research topic, and represents good practice. It is a helpful framework for considering how a research topic can

¹⁴ Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence (2019) and World Health Organisation (2010).

identify the priority across four key research considerations: population, intervention, comparison and outcomes.

3.3.2 Priority setting at the national research level

Given that ANROWS' is a national research organisation and has an important role as a policy broker and research leader, its key priority setting process is setting a national agenda for research that:

- articulates key research gaps and topics
- translates policy questions into research questions
- expands the evidence base on what works
- continually assesses the priorities to ensure they are fit for purpose.

An effective national research agenda should:

- enable the national research organisation to be transparent in deciding which of the research priorities it is able to meet (through its research program using internal or externally commissioned researchers)
- influence other organisations to align their activity and funding
- encourage researchers to lead research in the priority areas
- ensure that funded research has the greatest potential public benefit
- align with the evidence and with the needs of decision makers; in this case policy makers
- and ensure that limited resources are used efficiently and equitably.

There is a clear expectation that ANROWS set a national research agenda in close collaboration with all the governments across Australia and other key stakeholders. This expectation is set out in its constitution and culminated in the launch of an "Australian National Research Agenda to reduce violence against Women and their Children" (ANRA) in 2014. The 2014 ANRA identified broad areas of research that were considered important to the development of policy and practice.

However, priority setting, including through a national research agenda, should be an ongoing process and any priorities set as part of the process should be revisited. This could be on an annual basis or to coincide with strategic planning, such as the National Plan framework. Importantly, any update or review of the priorities should be communicated with stakeholders so they can understand how the landscape might have changed and adjust their expectations or research activities accordingly.

Consultation participants advised that despite a strong desire from the sector to see the initial ANRA refreshed, this had not been done since it was created.

As part of the refresh, consultation participants would like to see a clearer idea of the research questions that must be addressed. Additionally, a view as to who, besides ANROWS, should support, partner or answer those questions should also be provided. It was noted that ANROWS national position, and the steps it has taken within the family, domestic and sexual violence sector to connect with many different organisations, placed it in a good position to do so.

The review notes that at the time of writing this report, ANROWS was in the process of refreshing the ANRA and developing new national research priorities. This shows a willingness to respond to the feedback of stakeholders and an understanding of the ANRA's importance.

3.3.3 ANROWS priority setting process

In the absence of a refreshed and updated ANRA, ANROWS has focused its priority setting at the individual grant agreement, program or project level. This has meant that ANROWS hasn't fulfilled the research leadership function that its constitution sets out it should. Not having an ANRA means ANROWS is having to reactively set a research agenda and priorities each time it is granted funding.

Noting that ANROWS is refreshing the ANRA, the review sought to understand some of the activities and outcomes of previous priority setting

to inform suggestions for how ANROWS might undertake this process in future.

Clarifying the context and setting criteria:

The review found that in the past, this upfront expectation setting piece had not always been adequately managed by ANROWS. One example the review heard was the recent priority setting process that was conducted to determine what research priorities to be delivered under the Fourth Action Plan agreement. This particular grant is administered by the Department on behalf of the Commonwealth government.

The review was told that the process of identifying and then shortlisting priority topics proved both time consuming and reliant on additional oversight and resources from the Department. This was in large part due to a misalignment in the expectations of what the process would deliver and the outputs delivered by ANROWS throughout the process. One example being the consistent delivery of “research topics” to the Department for consideration, as opposed to specific “research priorities” which would guide decisions on investment and project funding. Delivery of “research priorities” rather than “research topics” would mean that they could then ascertain whether more specific “research topics” were indeed addressing the right priorities.

As part of upfront planning, a criteria should also be determined to help assess priorities. The NSW Ministry of Health priority setting process suggests the following criteria:

- research is focused on an area of need, that can be translated into policy and practice
- the issue is relevant to current domestic, family and sexual violence strategic priorities
- research will address gaps in knowledge
- research has potential to address inequities or priority populations in the case of the National Plan
- there is an anticipated return on investment through the use of the research

- opportunity is provided for collaboration and partnerships between researchers, policy makers and practitioners
- feasibility of the research, including practicability of particular methodologies and availability of data.

The review found that ANROWS did often set a criteria to its priority setting process, however, the needs of stakeholders and overlaps in their suggestions often took priority above the results of any criteria. The review also found that the last criteria suggestion, which looks at the feasibility of a piece of research was often not well-considered, with some of ANROWS projects having been delivered and for example minimal sample sizes not achieved.

One example of this included the “Violence prevention and early intervention for mothers and children with disability” project. A review of the final research report found that while the minimum sample size for professional staff had been achieved, the minimum sample sizes for children and their mothers was well below target. This was owing to the sensitivities of talking to women who may not have self-identified as having a disability.

While this sensitivity does not reflect on the researchers themselves or those involved in conducting interviews, it does warrant consideration as to why these concerns weren’t surfaced earlier, before investment decisions were made to prioritise and fund such a piece of work. In this way, feasibility of the piece of research could have been assessed and if still deemed a priority, the methodology altered to suit the availability of data.

Be evidence informed:

The review found examples of ANROWS undertaking this work with extensive literature reviews often providing the foundation for their priority setting activities. ANROWS latest refresh of the ANRA has specifically looked at 92 international systematic reviews published between 2015 and 2020, as well as its own research and 43 reports produced by other

Australian research institutes and peak bodies, such as the ABS, AIFS, Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), etc.

The review noted that this process often tended to be extensive, and as ANROWS looked to refresh the ANRA and maintain it on a more regular basis, this process should reduce with the addition of new sources or more recent research.

Involve stakeholders:

The review found that ANROWS priority setting process usually included consultation with its existing networks such as the NPSO and PEG groups, as well as its contacts within organisations such as Our Watch, the ABS, AIFS and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

Feedback from government representatives noted this process felt somewhat reactive, and in many cases noted there was little opportunity for them to provide well-thought through ideas. This was owed to timelines and the nature of the forums they were engaged in. They noted often speaking to the topics at the forefront of their minds, and not necessarily having the time to reflect on their wider jurisdictional strategic priorities or emerging trends.

The types of stakeholders engaged by ANROWS in the process was also limited to those close to ANROWS and familiar with mainstream issues impacting women's safety.

Stakeholder feedback, particularly from researchers and other research institutes, noted this was important to surface areas that might not be obvious. One example of this is a randomised controlled trial to see if sertraline (a commonly prescribed selectively serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressant) reduces offending behaviour in male perpetrators. The study, first funded by the NHMRC, is one of the first to adopt a pharmacological approach to the prevention of recidivism in perpetrators. They also noted more generally that involving those "outside of the tent" would inevitably lead to more diversity of thought and fostering of innovative approaches to research outside of ANROWS natural tendency.

One example cited was a project currently funded under the ARC which looks at the lessons from the Global South on gendered violence and women's only police stations in Buenos Aires. However, other participants suggested ANROWS could consider the use of consultancies or think tanks whereby they might have a more customer oriented arrangement to enable rapid responses to timely and critical issues such as the bush fire impacts on domestic, sexual and family violence. The methodologies employed by these organisations, such as cost benefit analysis, could also provide more balance to ANROWS existing qualitative research approach.

Feedback from both government and non-government stakeholders also noted the reactive nature of these consultations meant that ANROWS was often seen to be "taking orders". This is opposed to ANROWS leading the conversation as to what research priorities should be moving forward. Similarly, feedback suggested that ANROWS is not successfully influencing the remit of other organisations that conduct research or data collection activities, such as Our Watch, the AIC or ABS.

Other organisations noted their extensive stakeholder engagement mechanisms. This involved actively playing a policy brokerage role to help policy makers understand the true research and policy questions that need to be answered. Additionally, this involves enabling the subsequent knowledge translation that is required to drive a population-level impact. These conversations helped to align their research priorities and inform policy makers of where to divert resources.

Selection and communication of research priorities:

The review came back to the tendency of ANROWS to select research priorities based on overlaps of identified research gaps and stakeholder priorities, as opposed to, selection of priorities against a defined criteria. This approach means that while stakeholder views are heavily weighted in the decision-making process, it did not allow for ANROWS to exercise its expertise in understanding the research that might have the most impact within the sector or what research was feasible.

It is suggested in refreshing the ANRA that consideration be given to a strong criteria that reflects the aforementioned suggestions and allows ANROWS to exercise its own expertise as a national body. We would also suggest that ANROWS tests this criteria with its funders and its board, who can provide strategic advice on the strength of these criteria and their applicability to balance competing stakeholder expectations.

In addition, ANROWS does not normally publish the process or rationale as to why it has selected to fund research projects. There would be much benefit to the sector if ANROWS research priorities were clear and publicly available to avoid duplication or enable partnering with ANROWS where alignment might exist. One example of where this might be beneficial is under the Fourth Action Plan. Additionally, thought as to why these priorities were chosen might also help other organisations, particularly those smaller and without the breadth of resources and connections of ANROWS, to understand more easily where they might lay focus.

The review understands ANROWS plans to make publicly available a document that outlines the ANRA refresh process, in addition to the research priorities themselves and the outcomes they seek to achieve.

Review and update priorities:

When compared to other research institutions, the review found that ANROWS priority setting process was a point in time exercise, and not embedded within its regular operations.

For example, the Campbell Collaboration actively conduct systematic reviews to critically appraise existing research, to not only inform policy, but to also identify gaps in the evidence base, by which funding into primary research should be directed.

The review noted that while capacity plays some part in this approach, it is also likely driven by the broader absence of an outcomes focused

measurement framework for ANROWS to measure its effectiveness and impact. This can often lead to a focus on delivering an output, in this case, a set of projects. This is rather than an ongoing understanding and appreciation for priority setting as an outcome that drives decisions around specific projects and engages stakeholders. Outcomes focused measurement frameworks can assist in reminding organisations why they do certain activities and processes.

The existence of an ANRA that is refreshed on a cyclical basis would alleviate this burden and enable ANROWS to be more responsive to its stakeholders and funders.

3.3.4 Findings and recommendations.

The review found:

1. ANROWS priority setting process is reactive.
2. The priority setting process did not always yield “priorities”, but instead a list of specific “projects”.
3. A reliance on familiar stakeholders to input into the process, which is inhibiting innovation.

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Refresh its national research agenda, with transparent communication of priorities and process to get there¹⁵.
2. ANROWS works with its board and some of its funders to establish a criteria to assess research priorities against.
3. Engage with a broader set of stakeholders to surface new ideas and new approaches to research.
4. Conducts regular scanning of the environment to keep ahead of trends

and prompting the agenda, as well as measurement of its impact and recognition that ANROWS maintenance of the agenda is still ongoing.

¹⁵ The review acknowledges that ANROWS has published a refreshed national research agenda on 20 October 2020. It will be important to focus on embedding

3.4 Funding

What is ANROWS ability to utilise funding to achieve its objectives?

3.4.1 Funding sources

ANROWS is primarily funded through a core grant¹⁶. Over the course of the National Plan (2009-18) ANROWS has received \$27.9 million in funding from the Department, of which half of their core funding comes from the states and territories¹⁷.

The latest 2020-22 core grant provides ANROWS with \$6.8m (excluding GST) over two years, with the Commonwealth and state and territory governments (COAG) each providing 50% on a per capita cost-share basis.¹⁸ Core funding enables ANROWS to continue its work under the National Plan, as well be able to meet its other financial obligations such as operating costs and overheads.

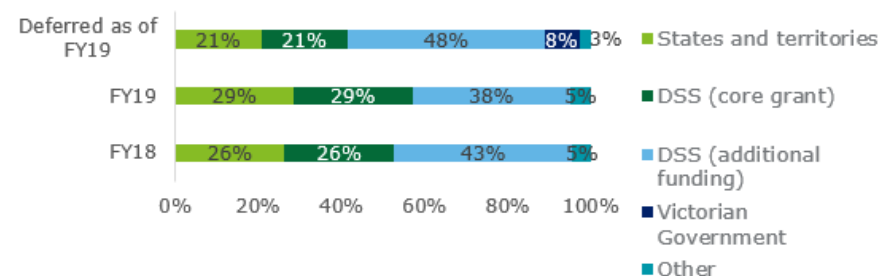
In addition to this funding, ANROWS has also received a Fourth Action Plan grant to specifically address initiatives under the Fourth Action Plan. This grant runs for the 2019-22 financial year period and amounts to \$5.6m (excluding GST), and is provided by the Commonwealth. ANROWS was also funded \$3.1m to undertake the NCAS 2017 survey¹⁹, with its FY18 and FY19 contributions represented in Figure 3-5 as "DSS (additional funding)". This funding has continued, with \$4.3m being provided for ANROWS to conduct the 2021 NCAS survey and two related qualitative projects.

Federal, state and territory bodies have contracted ANROWS to undertake and support discrete data collection and analysis activities (see Figure 3-5)²⁰. In 2019, this amount totalled \$2.2 million²¹.

¹⁶ Previous grant agreements have included: 2013-2016, 2016-2020 and 2020-2022.

¹⁷ This figure includes state and territory funding (held in a Special Account), Auditor General (2018).

Figure 3-5 Revenue by source, FY18-19



Source: Port Jackson Partners (2020).

Across the different national research organisations, the following table summarises the operating revenue of similar sized organisations to ANROWS. Overall, ANROWS operating revenue when compared to similar sized organisations is relatively proportional.

Figure 3-6 Operating revenue of similar organisations to ANROWS

Research organisations	Operating revenue (FY19, \$M)	No. of employees
ANROWS	6.5	32
Grattan Institute	3.9	29
AIFS	14.1	82
AHURI	6.4	20-21
Our Watch	14.0	~60

¹⁸ ANROWS (2019).

¹⁹ The 2017 NCAS survey was funded from 2015 to 2018.

²⁰ ANROWS (2019).

²¹ ANROWS Annual Report (2018).

Source: ANROWS Annual Report (2019-18), Gratton Institute Annual Financial Report (2019), AHURI Financial Statement (2018-19), Our Watch Annual Report (2018-19) and AIFS Annual Report (2018-19).

3.4.2 Use of its funding

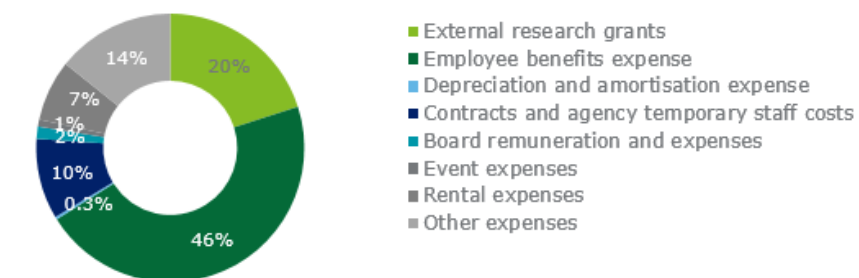
As published in ANROWS 2018-19 Annual Report and reflected in Figure 3-7, it can be seen that in FY19, the majority of ANROWS funding is dedicated to its research and knowledge translation activities.

Over the life of the 2016-2020 core grant, its research was allocated the largest proportion of core grant funds, approximately 48%. This includes 22% for funding of ANROWS external research grants and 26% for internal knowledge production activities, such as scoping research priorities, project and quality management, contract negotiation, peer review processes etc.

This activity is subject to slight fluctuation each year, and in FY19 funding for external research grants was slightly lower at \$1m or 20% of its total expenditure. Internal knowledge production activities were also lower, at \$0.9m or 18% of its total expenditure. This can be attributed to many of its research projects reaching completion in this year and as such, a shift in focus to translation and dissemination activities. In FY19 ANROWS published 12 research reports, six policy and practice papers and 14 additional resources to synthesise results and communicate policy and practice implications from its research program.

A full breakdown of its spend in FY19 can be seen in Figure 3-7. It can be said that 76% of ANROWS funding within FY19 was directly allocated to research activities and the translation and dissemination of that research. This is with consideration to staff costs (56% of its expenditure in FY19) inclusive of ANROWS research and evidence to action functions, and 20% spent on external research grants. A further 7% is spent on its events, taking this total to 83%. This is to be expected of an organisation whose primary objectives are to deliver and commission research, and ensure it is widely disseminated.

Figure 3-7 ANROWS expenses, FY19



Source: ANROWS (2019).

3.4.3 Alternative funding sources

Consultations with other organisations set up with a similar funding structure to ANROWS showed a clear investment plan, and interest in funding sources from the private sector. For example, the Australian and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), also shares the same Company status as ANROWS and is limited by guarantee. The company is funded by annual contributions from its member governments, contributions for academic chairs, income generated from capital gains and surpluses from its core programs. What is distinctively different, is that it was established with a capital injection of \$16 million from both the Australian and New Zealand governments. So while it receives annual contributions and is able to generate income through its degree education, it also has an investment committee, which has helped it to build an investment portfolio that allows it to fund its research and advisory operations. This initial injection has afforded ANZSOG a level of certainty and ability to plan for its future should any of its member governments cease to contribute.

Similarly, the government has set up a Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), a \$20bn long-term investment to support Australian health and medical research. Every year the government uses some of the net interest from the investment to pay for medical research initiatives.

However, unlike ANZSOG, ANROWS is funded by grants, rather than an annual allocation or budget. Funding is released to ANROWS in half-yearly instalments and are to be used exclusively to fund what is outlined in the grant agreement. Therefore, it would likely preclude ANROWS from using these funds to invest in a futures fund. However, ANROWS constitution does afford it a charity status and it must have a separate bank account to deposit monies donated to the Fund that will sit separately from other funds of the Company. Therefore, under its charitable status it could be entitled to invest these funds.

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) recommends charities invest in bonds, stocks or term deposits that are not high risk. It also states investment forms part of good financial management practice for charities. The ACNC also outlines that charities are able to make a surplus, providing it is used to further its charitable purposes, which aligns with the review's suggestion for a "futures fund", set up to fund future ANROWS research and projects.

ANROWS has sought additional funding from government, with its funding above the core grant almost doubling its revenue from \$2.9m in FY15, to \$5.0m in FY19²². This includes funding for projects such as an independent evaluation of the 1800RESPECT Disability Pathways Project funded by Medibank for \$201,735. The project sought to improve support for women with disability who had been impacted by or were at risk of domestic, family or sexual violence. The Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet also funded ANROWS in June 2019 to support the monitoring and evaluation of the Free from Violence Local Government Grants Program providing funding of \$497,551.

Despite this, it still operates with a high reliance on its government grants and considers this arrangement as challenging in providing cashflow and capital for it to be flexible, to grow and take on longer-term projects. The review considers that many organisations (not just those that are reliant on government funding) operate with a level of uncertainty in relation to their funding. However, the grant structure appears to add further rigidity

and adds to ANROWS mindset of uncertainty that impacts its ability to think long-term, pursue other opportunities and grow its organisation.

Demonstrating value to funders and impact on policy makers as key stakeholders would alleviate some of the uncertainty around government funding. In addition, different funding models should be explored to minimise some of the challenges with grants as well as better achieve the objectives of both ANROWS and its funders.

In addition, there is benefit to the Board exploring potential investment opportunities, including from the private sector and philanthropic funding. Philanthropic funding would allow ANROWS to generate capital for a futures fund, should it choose to set one up. Board members with extensive relationships within the family, sexual and domestic violence sector, would also be valuable to the CEO in engaging with states and territories, particularly government and other local funders. Future appointment of Board members should include thought to recruiting members with demonstrated financial acumen and extensive relationships within the sector and beyond. In the meantime, ANROWS could look to solicit these skills in an advisor to the Board, until a more permanent solution can be found. This is explored further in Section 6.2.

²² Port Jackson Partners (2020)

3.4.4 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. The majority of ANROWS funding is focused towards its research.
2. ANROWS has increased its additional funding sources, outside of its core grants administered by the Commonwealth, states and territories.
3. A cautious approach to planning further than its grant cycle, in fear of loss of funding.

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Continues to seek additional funding from other sources, including philanthropic funding and the private sector
2. Investigates the possibility of starting a futures fund to diversify its income stream and provide funding for future projects
3. Exploration of different funding models to promote flexibility and long-term planning to better meet objectives of ANROWS and its funders

4 Research, translation and impact

4.1 About this section

This section reports on ANROWS approach to research, knowledge translation and understanding the impact of its research. It also looks at ANROWS achievements to date.

Specifically, this section will address the following review terms of reference:

- the approach to research production and knowledge dissemination, and whether other mechanisms exist beyond current methods (n)
- the usefulness of ANROWS output for jurisdictional policy and program development (d)
- breadth and appropriateness of strategies used to support research (i)
- achievements to date in delivering to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (g)

Why it matters

Research, translation and impact are key aspects of ANROW's value proposition. It has created lots of research for a broad range of stakeholders, with practitioners particularly pleased with the output. Over time it has responded to stakeholder feedback to make its research more digestible and easier to access. Stakeholders noted there was still more to do in this respect.

To be more impactful ANROWS must consider policy makers as its key stakeholders who can drive the broadest impact. It must consider broader research methods and communication that promotes dialogue so that it may be clearer on the needs of policy makers and the wider Australian community.

4.2 Research and knowledge approach

What is ANROWS approach to research production and knowledge dissemination? Do other mechanisms exist beyond their current methods?

4.2.1 Research and knowledge strategy

ANROWS' 2016-19 strategy includes two goals dedicated to its approach to research and knowledge dissemination, these are:

- Goal 1: Deliver high quality, innovative and relevant research
- Goal 2: Ensure the effective dissemination and application of research findings

A more detailed outline of its research and knowledge dissemination goals are described in Figure 4-1 (below).

Though not explicitly called out in its strategy, ANROWS commissions a large amount of its research, which informally is its strategy and approach to research. Between October 2014 and June 2020, ANROWS has supported a total of 64 research projects, of which 83% were commissioned. The remaining projects were conducted internally or with partner organisations, such as the *Change the Story* national framework developed with Our Watch and VicHealth²³. ANROWS has a relatively small in-house research team, with 14 staff specifically dedicated to its research program, spanning research it conducts under its core grant, the Fourth Action Plan and the NCAS research programs.

²³ ANROWS Project register (2020).

Figure 4-1 ANROWS 2016-19 goals related to research and knowledge dissemination

Goal 1: Deliver high quality, innovative and relevant research	They will achieve this by:
1.1.	Developing, leading and promoting the National Research Agenda as endorsed by Ministers and other stakeholders
1.2.	Managing a research program in agreed priority areas to support the National Research Agenda and the National Plan
1.3.	Increasing the volume and quality of research into domestic and family violence and sexual assault
1.4.	Establishing and adhering to research processes that are open, transparent and efficient
1.5.	Ensuring ongoing stakeholder consultation and involvement in ANROWS research activities and decision-making processes
1.6.	Drawing on the expertise of researchers and research organisations to ensure that funded research meets high standards of intellectual and methodological rigour.

Goal 2: Ensure the effective dissemination and application of research findings	They will achieve this by:
1.1.	Employing innovative, targeted communication strategies that are fit-for-purpose to disseminate national and international research on domestic and family violence and sexual assault
1.2.	Establishing and maintaining mechanisms to facilitate the uptake of evidence to change policy and practice
1.3.	Adapting, tailoring and packaging evidence for a variety of users to increase accessibility and uptake
1.4.	Monitoring and evaluating the impact of ANROWS evidence on policy and practice
1.5.	Leading knowledge translation and application theory and practice in the violence against women field.

Source: ANROWS Strategy (2016-19)

A framework or success measures to understand achievement against these goals has not been developed. In the absence of an implementation plan that could be monitored, monitoring focuses on the completion of progress reports per each of its research projects. Additionally, it focuses on delivery against the activity work plans that form its grant agreements, funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. As explored in Section 3.2, these mechanisms have varied effectiveness and are not tied together to give a cohesive view of ANROWS achievements against its objectives.

Development of measurable success criteria so that ANROWS has a mechanism by which to measure its achievement of these objectives is recommended. This will help ANROWS to better understand the impact it is making within the sector.

4.2.2 Research production

ANROWS is classed as a Category 1 funder due to its funding being provided on a nationally competitive basis, and its selection process being competitive, transparent and supported by a highly qualified panel. Unlike the Australian Research Council (ARC) and NHMRC, ANROWS is the only Category 1 funder with a sole focus on the domestic, family and sexual violence space. For this reason, it attracts interest from career academics and many highly regarded academic institutions who perceive their chances of securing a grant higher than if they were to apply for an ARC or NHMRC grant whereby they fund a varying range of research topics.

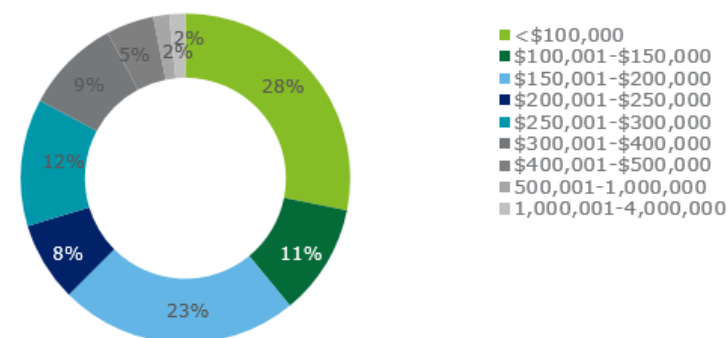
Consultation participants noted ANROWS unique position in being able to fund types of research that might not otherwise have come into being. This was put down to ANROWS position as a national research organisation with a unique focus, and the fact that many universities aren't as well equipped to fund multi-disciplinary or highly specialised extensive research, with one such example being its research into the impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence on parenting. This was raised by many participants as an important differentiator for ANROWS, especially in the context of an issue such as family violence, which has not always received the level of funding and backing of today.

ANROWS research is predominantly commissioned through either an open grant process or direct tender. Through this process, ANROWS has engaged with academics from 28 partner institutions, including 19 universities and nine organisations or agencies²⁴. Consequently, ANROWS has a large focus on the research commissioning process and management of its research portfolio, which can span upwards of 20 projects at any one time.

Half (50%) of all ANROWS projects had a set timeframe for 18 months or less, with the majority (73%) of projects planned to conclude within two years. Further, almost two thirds (62%) of projects had a budget of \$200,000 or less (see Figure 4-2). In contrast only 4% of the projects it

conducted were allocated a budget over \$500,000. Striking a balance between smaller projects that meet varying stakeholder needs, and those that are impactful is critical to ANROWS evolution. As a national body, ANROWS will always have a place to fund research that smaller organisations could never find viable. However, it does need to balance this with the administrative burden that comes with managing such a diverse portfolio of projects in an area of national priority and scrutiny. Therefore, the review came back to the conclusion that ANROWS must prioritise the needs of policy makers, as its funders, and those with a direct impact on policy decisions, which in turn will drive a population level impact, as its priority.

Figure 4-2 Project budget range (n=64)



Source: ANROWS Project register (2020).

In working with the team to understand the process, and consulting with researchers who have worked with ANROWS, it was clear the process is quite tightly managed. This means researchers are not afforded the freedoms they might enjoy conducting research through their academic institution or perhaps the ARC. Multiple researchers noted they found they had a “contractual” relationship with ANROWS, rather than a collaborative or partnership relationship.

²⁴ ANROWS Project register (2020).

However, other researchers referenced the great respect they had for the CEO and her team, owing to their backgrounds in research and their deep understanding of research methods. In particular, most established researchers were thankful for the opportunities and support they received from ANROWS to conduct research in the space.

Some researchers felt they were only engaged to provide updates on timelines and budget, with no meaningful dialogue or discussion on how the research or findings might be looking. They also noted the turnover of staff at ANROWS²⁵ made it difficult to build rapport with staff. Some researchers noted that they were often required to explain multiple times to multiple ANROWS staff their research methodology, intended knowledge translation plan, as well as any challenges they might be facing and advice on how to remedy these. Despite these views, ANROWS turnover is considered average.

A small number of researchers also shared their hesitancy in working with ANROWS due to the tendency to feel micro-managed. Some even noted that they had advised researchers within their academic institutions to not apply for ANROWS grants as a result. This was particularly stressed for early career researchers, who may not receive the adequate support they need to succeed and develop their careers.

Therefore, the review found that the different views of researchers was likely a result of researchers adjusting to the particular needs of research for a policy making audience. Some researchers were more comfortable in working closely with ANROWS and its stakeholders and others preferred to work with more autonomy and fewer check-ins. ANROWS staff also identified that some researchers were more invested in the work than others and therefore, produced better quality.

Though the process is quite tightly managed, most projects were still delivered after their scheduled completion date, although very few went over budget.

²⁵ ANROWS had an average turnover rate of ~25% p.a. over FY18 and FY19, Port Jackson Partners Strategic Review (2020).

It is clear that ANROWS needs to develop good working relationships with a range of researchers. However, this should not be at the expense of a tightly managed process, where the research output, its knowledge translation strategy and its impact on policy is continually discussed in a proactive, collaborative and constructive manner.

4.2.3 Knowledge translation, dissemination and dialogue

In recent years, ANROWS has made a positive and marked shift towards building its capability to translate and disseminate the research it produces. The current Director of the Evidence to Action team, joined ANROWS in 2017 and since then, the team has grown to 12 members. This includes 10 full-time staff members, including the Director, and 2 additional part-time staff members to manage the ANROWS conference and their webinar program.

Investment in the team has enabled ANROWS to shift its focus to knowledge translation and make in-roads to understanding how best to translate its research into practical resources for policy makers and practitioners.

The team works directly with researchers to produce digestible materials that are easy to use and access online, which can take the form of:

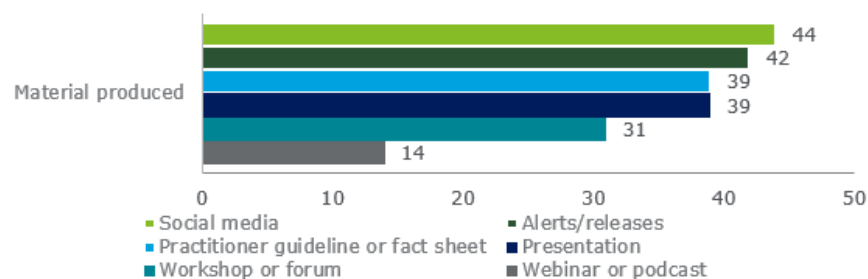
- Research to policy papers
- Practice and policy guidelines and frameworks
- Fact sheets and infographics
- Conference abstracts and presentation collateral
- Webinars and podcasts
- Capability building activities.

These materials are released via a range of channels specifically designed by ANROWS as well as existing platforms:

- **ANROWS databases:** ANROWS website, ANROWS Library, a Register of Active and Recent Research (RARR)
- **ANROWS distribution lists:** Notepad (ANROWS' online fortnightly newsletter), eAlerts (part of Notepad subscription)
- **ANROWS events:** ANROWS' biennial conference, knowledge to action workshops, webinars
- **External databases:** partner websites
- **Media:** social media (Twitter), stakeholder newsletters
- **Stakeholder forums:** National Plan Senior Official (NPSO) and Practitioner Engagement Group (PEG) networks.

The most commonly produced Knowledge, Translation and Exchange (KTE) is a media release disseminated on social media; almost three quarters (72%) of projects have social media as part of their KTE plan (see Figure 4-3)²⁶. Two thirds (69%) of projects disseminate research findings via ANROWS e-alerts. Over half (61%) of researchers prepare practitioners guidelines, factsheets or presentations to share their findings. Less than half (48%) attend workshops or forums, and 21% produce a webinar or podcast.

Figure 4-3 KTE produced for research projects



Source: ANROWS Project Register (2020).

²⁶ ANROWS Project register (2020)

ANROWS has focused on continually improving the reach of its materials, which has seen increased engagement over time:

- Annual engagement on the ANROWS website has almost doubled between 2015 and 2020. Specifically, engagement has increased from 48,400 unique users (annually) in 2015 to 100,000 in 2020.
- The number of Notepad subscribers has more than tripled between 2015 and 2020. Specifically, subscribers have increased from 1,400 Notepad subscribers in 2015 to 5,300 in 2020.
- ANROWS has gained increasing traction on social media; since opening a Twitter account in 2017, ANROWS has gained 5,000 followers.

While these stats talk to the reach of ANROWS materials, limited information, other than that sourced from its Stakeholder Survey, was available to understand its impact or direct use for policy and service design.

4.2.4 Future approaches

To understand whether there were methods beyond those currently employed by ANROWS to produce and disseminate its research, the review sought to understand the methods utilised by other research and data institutes such as the ABS, AHURI and AIC. The review also considered feedback from stakeholders through consultations and solicited from the 2020 ANROWS Stakeholder Survey.

4.2.4.1 Knowledge dissemination

ANROWS have established a consistent approach to their knowledge translation activities, with a move to establishing a KTE plan at the outset of its projects in collaboration with researchers. These plans usually include the production of a final report written by the research team, with the addition of fact sheets, webinars, media releases and social media coverage developed by the ANROWS Evidence to Action team.

The review found while this approach was consistent, there was very little tailoring of the content or the translation methods used based on the research project and its primary audience. Most of ANROWS resources are suited more to a practitioner audience than policy makers. This view was reinforced by consultation participants, with many policy makers noting the general usefulness of ANROWS research, but unable to draw a direct link between ANROWS research and their work. Conversely, practitioners were able to list many examples.

The review also found that ANROWS resources are largely based on ANROWS own research, with little inclusion of research from other reputable bodies. As ANROWS builds its relationships with other research bodies and academics, it should look to how it can leverage other publications and data to further support and substantiate its resources. A good example of where it has done this is its 2019 “Domestic and family violence, housing insecurity and homelessness” research synthesis insight report, which culminated ANROWS, AIHW, AHURI and ABS data to form a consolidated view on the recommendations for policy and practice.

Including non-ANROWS research into its translation activities increases the depth of its publications and will allow it to leverage evidence from across the sector and internationally to give stakeholders a fuller view. This practice would also align with its constitutional objectives, [5],[6] and [7], which speak to disseminating the evidence base widely, providing authoritative commentary on the evidence base and using international insights.

The review noted that there was a willingness from the Evidence to Action team to undertake these value-adding tasks, they were often hampered by low KTE budgets on projects, with researchers and funders often reluctant to allocate KTE the funding it needs for these tasks to be thoroughly undertaken. The NCAS survey is one example this is apparent, with the 2017 NCAS survey funded for a total of \$3.3m, but only allocated \$46,000 or 1.4% of the total spend. The 2021 NCAS survey has seen this rise slightly, with the budget slightly increasing to 2.5% of the overall NCAS budget, however this piece of work also includes two research projects which will likely require KTE. It is therefore recommended that ANROWS

and its funders build a shared understanding of the true costs to deliver high-quality and extensive KTE. Negotiating funding at the outset of its projects to ensure research quality as well as an appropriate proportion for KTE will be critical to impact.

Overall stakeholder feedback from all groups noted overall satisfaction with the research produced and the methods utilised to share findings. They also noted some areas of improvement, with a key theme around making the resources easier to digest in a time-poor environment. In addition to tailoring the resources to specific audiences, they also noted the need for:

- more synthesised findings across research rather than individual reports
- more webinars and podcasts, with many noting the increased frequency of these events in the advent of Covid-19, a welcome by-product of the virus
- a schedule of when upcoming research will be released to enable users to plan meetings, briefings or other events to coincide with release
- greater spacing between the release of research to help combat noise of papers released in quick succession
- more bite-sized resources (e.g. posters, infographics, one-page summaries), that are print ready, many practitioners noted they often printed and pinned them to noticeboards in their offices
- gradual release of findings for longer-term projects, this was particularly critical for policy makers, who often needed insights ahead of the forecast research completion date.
- improved search functionality of the ANROWS website, including improvements in accessibility for those with vision or hearing impairments.

In addition to these improvement areas, creation of a communications strategy to enhance its profile and capitalise on the touchpoints it had with stakeholders and research users through its knowledge translation methods.

Many consultation participants noted that ANROWS was seen to be academic in nature, and as such, this perception was likely limiting its audience to researchers and policy makers. They also noted a lack of mainstream media coverage compared to institutes such as the ABS or AIFS. These bodies are quite often representing their work in the media and called upon as the authority for certain topics; i.e. the ABS and general population statistics.

Where organisations like the ABS do this well is by leveraging their data and research to comment on topical issues in the community, providing short and sharp media releases that note the key facts, so that media outlets may easily pull out the data to support their stories. For example, in the month of August, one of the ABS' media releases included "Overseas Arrivals – Unprecedented Fall in 2019-2020²⁷" with strong links to the tighter border restrictions implemented by the government due to Covid-19. The review found the release was picked up across multiple online news channels, with The Australian, Australian Financial Review and SBS some of the major outlets to utilise the statistics in stories covering the impacts of the pandemic. Use of the content serves to reinforce the ABS as an authority for population-level statistics, and importantly provides evidence to substantiate debate and action within the community.

Given ANROWS research is quite focused, it may not always draw the interest of the general public. However, it has had opportunities to make comment that would enable providing authoritative commentary, as set out in its objects. One example the review heard was the Hannah Clarke incident in February 2020, which resulted in the murder of a mother and three children in a domestic violence incident in Queensland. Due to the high-profile nature of the family, a lot of media attention ensued, with very little evidence to back their claims as to the circumstances that can lead to such an incident. Consultation participants noted this could have been an opportunity for ANROWS to leverage its research evidence more broadly to inform the media and educate the general public.

²⁷ ABS (2020).

The review found ANROWS media releases on its website to be broad in nature, with some announcing new research collaborations, and others the results of completed research. The media releases generally did not link those research updates to current events. Many of these are linked to from the ANROWS Twitter account, which has over 5,000 followers. Statistics on the use of these by media outlets was not available.

A recent example of where this was done effectively and linked to current issues is in a Twitter post originating from ANROWS Chair and retweeted by ANROWS on 19th August. The post reads "Today, on the 6 month anniversary of the horrific murders of Hannah Clarke & her children @OurWatchAus Chair @NStottDespoja will deliver National Press Club address on Australia's domestic & family violence emergency @ANROWS @PressClubAust#DomesticViolence #genderequality #DV". Although not directly linked to the murder of Hannah Clarke and her children, the use of a topical issue to publicise the Press Club event, provides an interest point, which can be powerful in attracting interest on such a broad platform as Twitter. The tweet attracted 47 re-tweets and 111 likes which was one of the most popular tweets in the July to August 2020 period.

ANROWS should consider how it can do this more broadly across its social media. With limited resources, it may also want to reconsider its rationale behind the publication of its media releases. Thought as to the relevance of these in relation to wider policy or societal topics of interest and timeliness may see them have more impact, as opposed to its current process of releasing these once a research report is complete.

The ability for ANROWS to build a greater professional profile outside of the sector, would help in its objective to disseminate evidence widely and provide an authoritative commentary. It would also assist in its need to cross-pollinate with other sectors and improve the breadth of its research, as well as attract greater interest from potential funders.

4.2.4.2 Research mechanisms

Overall, the review found that a large proportion of ANROWS research had a qualitative focus, with 40% of its research purely qualitative and 50% of its research mixed methods²⁸. Only three projects within its project register had a purely quantitative approach. These being delivery of the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against women Survey (NCAS) and a deep dive into the data generated by the ABS' Personal Safety Survey²⁹.

Consultation participants from both academic and non-academic backgrounds acknowledged the value of qualitative research, particularly in understanding the lived experience of particular cohorts. Many noted that this research had added great value in surfacing new insights into domestic and family violence but also reinforcing our understanding of the issues at heart.

Consultation participants also noted that, in line with the Fourth Action Plans theme of "turning the corner", there must be a more balanced approach in order to see a real change. This includes thought as to how it can best balance its efforts across research methodologies, as focus on one methodology was unlikely to yield results required. Participants called for a shift to more quantitative methods with a particular focus on implementation and understanding what works. This included greater scanning of the international evidence base to see what learnings could be applicable within an Australian context, and where gaps exist that our particular context or expertise could help fill.

Data institutes such as the ABS and AIC also noted the challenges of filling data gaps where robust data might be needed to conduct research. They noted this was particularly prominent for priority populations such as people from CALD backgrounds, where sampling a representative cohort could be cost prohibitive. The ABS noted conversations in the past with ANROWS about these gaps, and a willingness to work through them together, noting that ANROWS could utilise their existing infrastructure,

²⁸ Mixed methods refers to research conducted with both qualitative and quantitative methods.

such as the Personal Safety Survey to fill data gaps or leverage their existing statistical frameworks and methodologies to conduct data collection activities themselves, like in the case of the NCAS survey.

It was also suggested that in cases of small sample sizes owing to geographical location, for example the Northern Territory, studies should instead seek to map data to regions with cultural or demographic similarities. This would seek to bolster the sample size, as data could be aggregated across a number of locations. An example shared was research into the nature and prevalence of domestic and sexual violence in remote or regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Northern Territory. Looking at the issue in isolation might raise issues as to the robustness of the research based on the limited sample size. If this research was conducted across communities residing in the northern parts of Western Australia and Queensland, this would provide the scale and robustness required for a national research body focus.

The review sought to consult with research organisations that used more quantitative approaches, such as the ABS, Campbell Collaboration, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) UK and the Centre for Evidence and Implementation (CEI Global) to understand what research mechanisms ANROWS should look to develop and commission in the future. These recommendations and their rationale are outlined in Figure 4-4.

²⁹ ANROWS Project Register (2020).

Figure 4-4 Suggested research mechanisms for ANROWS to explore

Incremental research

Develop a research program where individual projects build upon each other

Almost all research is incremental, in that it builds upon previous work. However, consultation participants noted that ANROWS research can often seem disjointed, and often conducted across many small projects, that don't seem to correlate or benefit each other. Consultation participants suggested that ANROWS need to show how their research programs that build upon each other and have a logical method to creating knowledge and impact.

This would also mean that ANROWS could plan projects over multiple funding cycles, giving it greater flexibility but also increasing the impact over time. For example, if funding did not come through in a subsequent cycle, previous work would still have a clear outcome, that was not dependent on the next piece of research. On the other hand, if it did, there would be an existing body of knowledge in which ANROWS could readily build upon.

Randomised trials and quasi experiments

Lead thinking and increase the use of quantitative approaches

Much of ANROWS research to-date has focused on qualitative outcomes and developing understanding of domestic violence and experience of particular cohorts. What was found to be lacking overall within the Australian context, is research that focused on quantitative evaluation of interventions and programs that could substantiate the return on investment of programs.

The ability to conduct randomised trials or quasi experiments in-house or partner with researchers who do have this capability would allow ANROWS to really understand "what works" and importantly let policy makers and

practitioners assess current practice, make comparisons between approaches assist with important funding decisions. Multiple consultation participants pointed to the "What Works" networks in the UK and in particular the College of Policing and Educational Endowment Fund as examples of where this has been done well. It was acknowledged that there are important ethical considerations to take into account but that these are not insurmountable. It was also noted that a research leader is required to develop new thinking and methods that address both research and ethical considerations. Body of knowledge in which ANROWS could readily build upon.

Rapid evidence reviews

Timely research on pressing or emerging issues

Rapid evidence reviews allow researchers are an alternative to longer systematic reviews. A rapid review speeds up the systematic review process by omitting stages of the systematic review making it less rigorous. They often take between 1-6 months.

Many government stakeholders noted the lack of responsiveness and agility for ANROWS to respond to emerging issues and pressing policy questions. A mechanism such as rapid evidence reviews, combined with strong knowledge brokerage skills, would allow ANROWS to respond more readily to policy makers who are often working against short deadlines and held to terms of government.

Greater international literature scanning

Lead understanding of the applicability of international evidence

While ANROWS does conduct some international evidence scanning, it was noted by many consultation participants there were international approaches to domestic and family violence that we could learn from and seek to apply in an Australian context. There is scope for greater international evidence scanning, particularly in areas where Australia has a poor evidence base, this can help to provide opportunities to build on existing evidence, rather than to start from scratch.

Implementation science

Increase focus on implementation research

For evidence to be impactful, it needs to be put into practice. While ANROWS seeks feedback on its knowledge translation and dissemination practices through its stakeholder survey, it doesn't have a mechanism to understand the uptake and effectiveness of its research into policy and practice.

This work could range from devising implementation plans based off research, right through to working with policy makers and practitioners and regularly reviewing data to understand how a policy or program was performing. Consultation participants noted this was important for not only understanding the efficacy of ANROWS research, but in also finding out what might hinder effective implementation of programs, so these lessons could be shared and incorporated into future research.

Systematic reviews and evidence and gap maps

Ongoing evidence mapping to inform the national research agenda

Evidence and gap maps are systematic and visual representations of the availability of rigorous evidence for particular policy domains. They serve to consolidate what is known and not known about "what works" and provide a visual guide to show areas of strong, weak or non-existent evidence.

The Campbell Collaboration utilises this method, with their website including interactive gap maps for some its research. Critically, gap maps suggest two things – where there are knowledge gaps and primary research and investment is needed, and where there is lots of data, in which systematic reviews will be useful to surface applicable evidence. This would support ANROWS in understanding where best to focus its investment and provide a mechanism to substantiate the national research agenda and influence where funding may be directed to address evidence gaps.

4.2.5 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. ANROWS produces a wide array of research and materials for its stakeholders to use.
2. A responsiveness to stakeholder feedback, with many recent improvements to ease use and access of their knowledge translation materials.
3. A focus on practitioner guidelines, with less of a focus on tailored materials for policy makers
4. A long history of qualitative research, with little quantitative research or conducting of trials to really understand what works

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Creates a dialogue with policy makers to better understand their needs and usefulness of their research and approach
2. Engages with those "outside the tent" to build capability to conduct more quantitative, implementation focused research
3. Focuses on conducting fewer, but larger research projects to help ANROWS to more effectively manage a smaller portfolio of projects at any one time

4.3 Research impact

How useful has ANROWS work been with respect to jurisdictional policy and program development?

4.3.1 Research focus

ANROWS research to date has largely focused on gaining a better understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence and the experience of people from particular cohorts or in specific contexts. In more recent years, they have undertaken more research with a focus on evaluating community projects and practice.

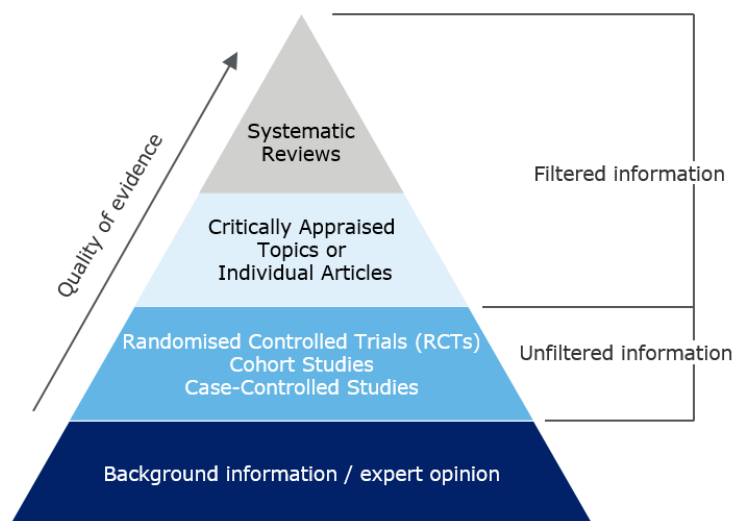
With limited research and available data on domestic, family and sexual violence prior to ANROWS establishment in 2013, the organisation has focused on building a research base. This aims to close the gap on understanding and inform where future research should be focussed. In looking across what academics describe as the “levels of evidence”, see Figure 4-5, this approach can be seen as a key enabler to unlocking the ability to conduct research into other areas such as trials and meta-analysis and systematic reviews which are considered to be the strongest level of evidence on which to guide practice and policy decisions.

Both government and non-government stakeholders noted the importance of research that increases our understanding of particular cohorts’ experiences, and reinforces what we might suspect, but have little evidence to support. They also noted that balancing this with research that had higher levels of evidence was important in understanding the quantifiable difference that investment in programs and services could have in addressing violence against women and their children.

Consultation participants commented on the concerted efforts that ANROWS has taken to fund research into priority populations (e.g. Aboriginal and multi-cultural communities). They acknowledged that often these groups were hard to reach, and many other organisations found it difficult to prioritise funding to these areas or have the right expertise and knowledge to conduct meaningful research. All consultation participants

agreed that funding for these particular projects was valuable and that ANROWS had a unique role to play in enabling research into priority populations.

Figure 4-5 Levels of Evidence



Source: Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (2009).

Examples included research projects such as:

- An exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs that respond to domestic and family violence and sexual assault (active)
- Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from CALD backgrounds in Australia (2020)
- Developing LGBTQ programs for perpetrators and victims/survivors of domestic and family violence (2020)

- Research into Women with disabilities: 'Women, disability and violence: Creating access to justice' and more.

They also acknowledged the importance of the Fourth Action Plan and its ambition to achieve change by improving existing initiatives, addressing gaps in previous action plans and providing a platform for future policy. This shift can be seen as a step towards more quantitative, evaluation methods, which as discussed in Section 4.2.4, will require different research mechanisms to those ANROWS has traditionally utilised in the past.

ANROWS has confirmed nine research projects (see Figure 4-6) in alignment with the Fourth Action Plan. As part of these projects, ANROWS will undertake a "what works" project. This will develop a framework and provide an overview of the existing evidence in relation to what works in prevention and response to violence against women. The review noted in comparison to previous grants, the total number of projects is smaller in comparison to previous grant agreements of a similar value. This shows a shift in ANROWS approach to focus on the robustness of evidence and efficacy of programs. Additionally, this demonstrates a willingness to invest in a smaller set of larger projects to increase its impact and reduce the operational burden of managing lots of smaller projects.

Figure 4-6 Fourth Action Plan (4AP) research projects funded under 2020-22 grant

Project title	Funding allocated	4AP priority areas addressed
Pathways to intimate partner homicide	\$196,000	3
Compliance with and enforcement of family law parenting orders	\$977,493	5
Technology-facilitated abuse: extent, nature and responses in the Australian community	\$294,031	3,4

Project title	Funding allocated	4AP priority areas addressed
A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia	\$295,865	3,4
"What works" to reduce and respond to violence against women: evidence synthesis, methods and communication	-	4,5
Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services	-	3,4
An exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs that respond to domestic and family violence and sexual assault	\$295,177	1,2
Respectful relationships in secondary schools: A control trial study and network evaluation of a classroom program for prevention of gender-based violence	\$766,320	1,5
Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network national data update	\$129,644	1,5

Source: ANROWS website (2020).

4.3.2 Application of research into policy and practice

The main way that ANROWS collects data on the application of research into policy and practice is through its stakeholder survey. The review also sought to gather this information directly from stakeholders through consultation with the Commonwealth, states and territories, policy makers and practitioners. See Appendix A for a full list of stakeholders consulted.

The most recent 2020 ANROWS Stakeholder Survey also included a question on the use of ANROWS reports in policy and practice. 70% of 2020 respondents reported they had used ANROWS research to inform policies or practice, with 135 respondents providing specific examples. The survey included 319 respondents and was shared directly with key stakeholders and via its Notepad newsletter and website³⁰.

Overall, both policy relevant and practitioner consultation participants noted a general usefulness of ANROWS work with respect to policy and program development. A large number of government stakeholders could vouch for the usefulness of ANROWS work but were unable to articulate a particular research paper. Similarly, they could not draw a link between ANROWS materials they had consumed and a direct policy or program implication.

When queried why this might be the case, many acknowledged that ANROWS research did not often time well with policy matters of the moment. In this respect, they were consistently delivering updates to their minister supported with ANROWS research but could not recall an instance when one of these updates directly translated to a policy outcome. This was not to say that ANROWS research was not relevant, as many noted it was often used to form a minister's perspective on an issue or to provide "fast facts" to substantiate an existing policy position they might be taking. The NCAS survey was one such example that was regularly cited as being useful in this respect.

In contrast to this, practitioners were readily able to share examples of ANROWS research they had used and were reliant on. Examples included use of:

- "Engaging men who use violence: Invitational narrative approaches" report to inform practice with respect to engaging men, when they were already offering support to their partners/ex-partners

- ANROWS research into the impacts of domestic violence on children, to help inform support services for children exposed to family and domestic violence
- "Invisible practices: Intervention with fathers who use violence" report to inform experience and training required for staff administering programs and support
- "Change the Story" report to educate the practitioners within my team on the theory of change and how we could apply that to our work
- ANROWS research into men's behaviour change programs.

Additional examples from the 2020 ANROWS Stakeholder Survey, more related to policy reform include:

- use of ANROWS research in working on the abortion reforms in NSW as a resource for the submission and advocacy with MPs, with the stakeholder noting the reform was successful
- compilation of ANROWS research into intimate partner violence for coronial reviews, as it was Australian based and contemporary
- use of "Change the Story" and other ANROWS publications to inform the evaluation of the NSW Tackling Violence program
- use of statistics from the NCAS survey in international forums, to show the relevance of attitudes to women and intimate relationships and how that can impact violence.

In addition to the Stakeholder Survey, there are informal feedback loops that ANROWS can leverage to engage and understand the application of its research and usefulness of its work.

ANROWS currently has two main forums of which it can regularly communicate with government and practitioners, these are the quarterly NPSO and PEG meetings.

In consulting with stakeholders who belonged to these groups, most noted that many of the conversations were one-way, with the conversation

³⁰ ANROWS Stakeholder Survey (2020).

largely geared towards ANROWS providing an update of its research plan and progress. Almost all government stakeholders expressed a desire for these meetings to be more collaborative and welcomed the suggestion of being able to share their feedback on research, including its applicability to their work. Similarly, practitioners involved in the quarterly PEG group, also expressed this desire and for it to become part of the regular agenda for those meetings. As ANROWS looks to transition its PEG forum to a more strategic engagement with national bodies and to take a systems-wide view, it should become easier for them to facilitate evidence-informed practice and policy discussions that seek to understand the impact of policy implementation as well as insights to inform future policy directions. t

For these engagements to work, it is important that ANROWS understands whether its NPSO members are truly representative of their jurisdictions and making concerted effort to canvass their thoughts and present these back to ANROWS. The review found this was unclear, as attendance at the quarterly NPSO meeting was not always consistent and many members were unsure of the purpose of the forum. Suggestions for how engagement might be more targeted and improved are explored in Section 5.5.

4.4 Achievements to date

What achievements has ANROWS made to date?

As noted in Section 0, mechanisms for evaluating ANROWS delivery against its objectives or the National Plan do not formally exist. Without robust data, it is difficult to assess the outcomes of ANROWS work, and as such, its achievements in delivering to the National Plan.

In the absence of these mechanisms, the review sought to understand the national initiatives delivered by ANROWS and whether these might

constitute achievements in the context of the National Plan and/or the expectations of its stakeholders. Figure 4-7, outlines these achievements and their outcomes.

Figure 4-7 ANROWS achievements to date³¹

Achievement	Key outcomes
Since its establishment, ANROWS has conducted research to fill a noticeable gap in the evidence base, cementing its position as the lead research institute within the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing evidence base aligned to the National Plan Establishment of the Register of Active and Recent Research (RARR) to understand local and international research.
Demonstrated understanding and focus on domestic violence that impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate research into ATSI populations Conduction of research that seeks to test non-mainstream methods
Delivery and management of high-profile projects, such as the NCAS survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High utilisation of its findings Demonstrable evidence of how attitudes are changing in Australia
A level of consistency and constancy in an environment of constant change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to keep issues at the forefront of changing governments
The number of highly revered researchers it has commissioned to undertake its work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers from top Australian universities and research institutes. Notable reputation attached to its research.

³¹ Source: stakeholder consultations, see Appendix A, ANROWS Annual Report (2019).

Achievement	Key outcomes
Development of capacity across the sector to design, implement and evaluate projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action research & evaluation projects delivered with organisations that have led to meaningful program improvements
Expansion of its additional grant funding, in the way of new grants from jurisdictions and independent organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY19, these contributions totalled \$2.2 million. Examples include: 1800RESPECT Disability Pathways Project funded by Medibank for \$201,735 and the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet who contracted ANROWS in June 2019 to support the monitoring and evaluation of projects funded under the Victorian <i>Free from Violence</i> action plan, providing funding of \$497,551.
Dedicated program of research on perpetrator interventions to support the implementation of the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions developed through COAG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research stream on perpetrator intervention established with 14 research projects completed since 2018.
Development of a National Risk Assessment Principles (NRAP), under the Third Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfilled commitment under the Third Action Plan National evidenced based framework that includes the risks that present for children and other family members. Informed by both national and international best practice.

4.5 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. ANROWS has made concerted effort to conduct research that considers priority populations, aligned to the National Plan.
2. The lack of clarity of policy makers as a key stakeholder, means ANROWS has not targeted its feedback mechanisms to this group.
3. Policy makers could not draw direct links between research and their work, where practitioners could.
4. Current NPSO and PEG forums tended to be one-way channels and this limited their effectiveness

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Establishes a link between its work and impact on policy and measures that impact
2. Prioritises broader research methods as a way to progress research across the sector and to build evidence on “what works”

5 Stakeholders

5.1 About this section

This section reports on ANROWS stakeholders, exploring who they are and their expectations of ANROWS. It also looks at the way ANROWS engages with them and the alignment of ANROWS work to its stakeholders' priorities.

Specifically, this section will address the following review terms of reference:

- the extent to which other stakeholder (both Government and the family violence sector) priorities are aligned with ANROWS work (and approaches that would support a strong alignment) (c)
- the perception of ANROWS role in the domestic and family violence landscape in Australia, including the volume and quality of research, and how that compares to that of its stakeholders (f)
- the connections ANROWS has with other organisations (e)

Why it matters

No organisation can exist without its stakeholders or customers. For ANROWS, it cannot exist without its funders; the Commonwealth, states and territories.

Its stakeholders are also critical in implementing its research to create impact in the fight against violence against women and their children. ANROWS most direct path to impact and systematic change is through policy makers. It is therefore important it considers these groups within the context of its strategy and how it can better leverage these relationships.

5.2 ANROWS stakeholders

Who are ANROWS stakeholders and what is their perception of ANROWS role?

ANROWS work involves working with a wide range of stakeholders, comprising government policy-makers and practitioners. This includes those from domestic, family and sexual violence, primary prevention and wider health, justice and human services sectors, researchers, peak bodies and others³².

Its funders, the Commonwealth, states, and territory governments are also its stakeholders. These bodies form a part of ANROWS, and core funders form part of ANROWS National Plan Senior Officials (NSPO) network. This group provides strategic and operational policy advice to ministers relevant to the National Plan. Some members are also part of its board, with four out of the nine board member positions represented by the Commonwealth, states and territories.

The sector in which ANROWS operates has a complex set of stakeholders. Owing to its size and structure, it is not possible for ANROWS to do everything that is expected of it. Effective management and understanding of who ANROWS key stakeholders are, is key to it utilises its limited resources for greatest impact.

Stakeholders of similar organisations, whose funding largely relies on the government and states and territories, noted that it is key for any organisation operating within this context to differentiate their owners from their key stakeholders. Most consultation participants agreed that once clarity was brought to the question of "who are you working for?", a

³² ANROWS website (2020).

clear mandate was set for determining a strategic direction in the interests of its owners.

All agreed that fostering these relationships and aligning the agenda made for more empowering relationships, and created greater opportunities to secure and increase funding. They also stated it had a direct impact on the reputation of the organisation once this question was clarified.

In this respect, ANROWS owners – the federal, state and territory governments – are its funders and the members of the company. Their needs for a strong evidence base to inform policy and practice should drive the primary focus of ANROWS. Even with this balance of stakeholders, a tension will always exist between what the Commonwealth sees as priorities compared to that of the states and territories, who are more in-tune with their own jurisdictional needs which can be quite specific owing to community demographics and trends.

In speaking to other research and data organisations within and outside of the sector, they suggested that seeking to understand what is nationally important, was most useful in marrying the priorities of the Commonwealth, states and territories.

The review sought to understand the perception ANROWS stakeholders had of its role, to inform whether alignment existed with its activities and the expectations of its stakeholders. This was deemed relevant from the perspective of understanding whether ANROWS was meeting the needs of its stakeholders at an organisational level, with its specific research activities analysed in Section 5.3.

These views were also sought to help test the national research body attributes that were deemed applicable to ANROWS, as set out in Section 2.4.1.

During consultations, stakeholders were asked to share their perception of ANROWS role within two contexts; its role in delivering to the National Plan and its role beyond 2022, thinking about its long-term strategy. A summary of these views has been set out in Figure 5-1.

Overall, the perception of ANROWS role was first and foremost as a research organisation. Specifically, one that not only commissions and conducts its own research to fill evidence gaps, but also looks to support and influence other organisations to understand research priorities. Consultation participants acknowledged the rigour and quality of its research and a will to see this continue over the length of the National Plan.

In looking beyond the National Plan, many consultation participants commented on ANROWS national status and the many networks it had created and belonged to. They saw ANROWS creating greater value through these mechanisms and to provide greater clarity and leadership to others across the sector.

The review also found that while consultation participants had similar views on ANROWS overarching role, there were also significant differences. Examples included practitioners' view of ANROWS future role as an advocacy body and researchers' view of ANROWS utilising more diverse research methods and having a greater international presence.

These differences are important to note, as it is not possible for ANROWS to meet the expectations of all its stakeholders, and so a tension will always exist. What can be seen from Figure 5-1 is an alignment in ANROWS current operations to the expectations of researchers and practitioners. As noted previously, it is important that this alignment shifts in future. The views and expectations of its Commonwealth, state and territory funders and policy makers must become its primary focus, with practitioners and researchers a secondary audience.

Figure 5-1 Stakeholder perceptions of ANROWS role

Stakeholder group	Perception of ANROWS role in delivering to the National Plan	Perception of ANROWS role beyond 2022
Commonwealth, state and territory funders (NPSO)	<p>NPSO members see ANROWS role as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fill a gap by producing research into family, domestic and sexual violence support implementation and application of policy and practice in order to deliver on the National Plan vision formulate practical action pieces for implementation provide a national voice in the sector. 	<p>NPSO members would like to see ANROWS role grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be more responsive to state and territory policy needs a research leader, that takes the lead in understanding the scope of domestic, family and sexual violence research across Australia and internationally, and provides guidance to other organisations on where best to focus their resources have a clear vision on what works in terms of prevention help the sector bridge the gap between research and implementation.
Policy makers	<p>Policy makers see ANROWS role as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create policy relevant research that can enable them to answer key policy questions and influence new policy decisions. generate general sector awareness of issues impacting domestic and family violence. 	<p>Policy makers would like to see ANROWS role grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be more responsive to the needs of policy makers and cycles of government have greater flexibility and agility to respond to new and emerging priorities.
Researchers (Who have worked with ANROWS)	<p>Researchers see ANROWS role as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement and develop a national research agenda for family, domestic and sexual violence deliver research that is multi-disciplinary, as well as focuses on vulnerable cohorts provide a clearinghouse function, whereby they review existing evidence, to inform knowledge gaps and specific areas of interest for researchers. 	<p>Researchers would like to see ANROWS role grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporate more diverse forms of research methodologies, such as quantitative analysis, systematic reviews and gap maps, to really understand “what works” tackle research that looks at primary prevention and the root causes of domestic, family and sexual violence become more outcomes focussed, so that the impact of their work can be more pronounced within the community have an international presence

Stakeholder group	Perception of ANROWS role in delivering to the National Plan	Perception of ANROWS role beyond 2022
Researchers (Who have not worked with ANROWS)	<p>Researchers, who have not worked with ANROWS, see ANROWS role as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement and develop a national research agenda for family, domestic and sexual violence • create “safe” research that has a direct link to government priorities, but is not necessarily “path-breaking”. 	<p>Researchers, who have not worked with ANROWS, would like to see its role grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporate more diverse forms of research methodologies, such as quantitative analysis, systematic reviews and gap maps, to really understand “what works” • balance different approaches to research that include discovery research, and incremental research • provide more academic freedom to the researchers it works with, to enable greater innovation and diverse thought • have an international presence.
Research and data institutes	<p>Research and data institutes see ANROWS role as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide leadership in the creation of an evidence base that addresses domestic, family and sexual violence • to take the lead in steering where funding should be allocated for research into family, domestic and sexual violence • to work collaboratively with other research and data institutes to leverage existing capability, experience and knowledge • effectively build stakeholder relationships amongst policy makers, practitioners and service providers to understand the key questions that need to be answered. 	<p>Research and data institutes, would like to see ANROWS role grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be more responsive and adaptable to the changing needs of the sector and emerging trends • play a greater role in working with them, and providing guidance on the initiatives and research they undertake related to domestic, family and sexual violence • incorporate more diverse forms of research methodologies, such as quantitative analysis, systematic reviews and gap maps, to really understand “what works” • establish an authoritative voice, with some stakeholders citing they should become a household name that is nationally recognised for their research and its rigour.
Practitioners	<p>Practitioners see ANROWS role as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce high quality research for use in service and program design • deliver research that focusses on key cohorts • An ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Practitioners would like to see ANROWS role grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide advocacy on behalf of the sector • push to change community perspectives on domestic, family and sexual violence – go further than the NCAS build links between different areas of the sector and across jurisdictions.

Source: stakeholder consults, see Appendix A, and ANROWS Stakeholder Engagement Survey (2020).

5.3 Alignment to stakeholder priorities

What alignment exists between ANROWS work and stakeholder priorities?

The National Plan provides a framework for action by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, connecting the important work of each jurisdiction towards achieving this vision. Supporting this framework is an implementation plan for the Fourth Action Plan which outlines the specific initiatives the Commonwealth, state and territory governments will deliver. Together these initiatives represent the range of responses needed to address domestic, family and sexual violence³³.

Published on the National Plan website, the implementation plan outlines all 160 actions under the Fourth Action Plan and can be easily filtered by priority area or jurisdiction. It provides a framework to understand what actions are already intended, and for ANROWS where it might be able to fund complimentary initiatives through its grant rounds.

Alongside the plan, ANROWS directly consults with its stakeholders to understand evidence gaps and priority areas, seeking to ensure alignment with its own research where possible. The main stakeholders it consults with include its board, the Department, the NPSO network and its PEG group. It also consults with organisations with specific expertise in certain areas, examples include:

- **Primary prevention:** Our Watch and Respect Victoria
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:** The Healing Foundation, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Lowitja Institute
- **Diverse lived experiences and experiences of sexual harassment and violence:** Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, ABS, Safer Families

- **Intimate partner homicide:** AIC, AIFS and Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network.

With the National Plan providing a framework for much of ANROWS research, and the initiatives of the jurisdictions, the review found areas of alignment between ANROWS work and jurisdictional priorities. To further this understanding, stakeholders were asked during consultations the degree to which alignment existed and where there were further opportunities for alignment. A summary of these views are captured in Figure 5-2. The review recognises that many of these perceptions will be influenced by the results of decisions made by ANROWS and its Board in 2016-17, due to much of its 2016-20 research program coming to fruition in the first half of 2020.

Government and non-government stakeholders both acknowledged a general alignment, with opportunities for further alignment usually focused on more recent trends or emerging research that might not be captured within the National Plan. The review notes that any future alignment to stakeholder needs should be focused on its Commonwealth, state and territory funders and policy makers. These stakeholders raised the need for research that allows them to quantify the impacts of domestic violence on our community. Additionally, they noted a need to understand what works to support them to make decisions, including where investment should be focused.

³³National Plan 2012-2022, DSS (2016).

Figure 5-2 Stakeholder priorities and opportunities for further alignment

Stakeholder group	Description of stakeholder priorities	Examples of alignment with ANROWS work	Opportunities for further alignment
Commonwealth, states and territory funders + policy makers ³⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale up/system development to determine what works Engaging with men to address gender equality and prevention of family violence Priority population groups, particularly multicultural communities and elderly women and women with disabilities Quantify economic cost of domestic and family violence (return on investment) to have a greater influence on policy Timely responses to emerging needs in the sector Horizon scanning of relevant international research to inform practice solutions Taking co-design approach to understanding and addressing issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research stream on perpetrator intervention established with 14 research projects completed since 2018. In-flight research projects include 'Improving family violence legal and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men who are perpetrators of family violence' Greater focus into CALD research, with 7 research projects completed in this area. Completed in May 2020, one example: 'Multicultural and settlement services supporting women experiencing violence' Research completed in May 2020: 'Developing LGBTQ programs for perpetrators and victims/survivors of domestic and family violence' Research completed in June 2020: 'Mothers and children with disability using early intervention services: identifying and sharing promising practice' Co-design approach taken to PATRICIA Project that was completed in June 2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning research that aims to understand the needs of elderly women who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence Developing a method that quantifies the impact of domestic violence, for policy makers and jurisdictions, to emphasise the importance of prevention and research Greater evaluation of the effectiveness of research that is stretched out to practice and policies in accordant jurisdictions. Research into domestic, family and sexual violence and the impact of crisis, e.g. natural disasters, Covid-19 pandemic Systematic reviews to surface what we know works, and where investment across jurisdictions could be focused.
Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What works to support the safety of domestic and family violence survivors Data on the relationship between reporting and incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New project as part of Fourth Action Plan research: "What works" to reduce and respond to violence against women" Research completed in June 2020: Crossing the line: 'Lived experience of SV among 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with the ABS on their Personal Safety Survey to gain or use existing data to understand under-reporting of incidents and reasons behind this.

³⁴ Priorities of Commonwealth, state and territory funders and policy makers were found to be aligned, as many policy makers work within government departments. Therefore, these stakeholder views were combined.

Stakeholder group	Description of stakeholder priorities	Examples of alignment with ANROWS work	Opportunities for further alignment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying groups that can be invisible in the system Domestic, family and sexual violence in rural and ATSI communities A focus on sexual violence as a stand-alone issue "Blue sky" research into understanding what the root causes of family violence are Drawing on international research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trans women of colour from CALD backgrounds' Research completed in June 2017: 'Seeking help for domestic violence: Exploring rural women's coping experiences' ATSI research stream established with 4 completed projects, and 3 in-flight projects. Research synthesis on 'Intimate partner sexual violence' to examine its characteristics, current service responses and prevention activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater scanning of international research organisations to gain insight into what has worked overseas, and what might be applicable within an Australian landscape Greater connections with bodies such as the ARC to influence priority areas of research and create more opportunities for "blue sky" research
Research and data institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematic reviews to understand what works and the evidence gaps Early interventions and responses in the criminal justice system Creation of primary data sets that are reflective of diverse populations and build our understanding Understanding domestic, family and sexual violence within a relational system, e.g. the family unit, homelessness, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research completed in partnership with AIFS in June 2020: 'Domestic and family violence and parenting: Mixed method insights into impact and support needs' Research completed in April 2018: 'Women, disability and violence: Creating access to justice' The SUSTAIN Study, completed in March 2020: 'Sustainability of identification and response to domestic violence in antenatal care', resulting in a practical evidence-based framework to help hospitals implement an approach for optimal DV screening and response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into policing, focused deterrence and what we know works Research into the early stages of the justice system Systematic reviews to create a roadmap of what works to focus investment on the ground Supporting the ABS to disseminate timely insights from its data Research into areas that have a relational impact on domestic, family and sexual violence.

Stakeholder group	Description of stakeholder priorities	Examples of alignment with ANROWS work	Opportunities for further alignment
Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perpetrator interventions and an understanding of how to engage men in the prevention of violence The effectiveness of men's behaviour change programs An understanding of the impact of domestic, family and sexual violence and the attitudes of children and young people Impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence on minority cohorts, such as rural, LGBTIQI and ATSI communities Evidence base to inform service offerings for women and children of a CALD background (particularly temporary visa holders and new migrants) Research that identifies the barriers to victims accessing support services, and provides possible solutions Research that targets the capabilities and skillsets required for the future of service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCAS resources to understand the specific views and attitudes of young people towards violence against women and gender equality Research stream on perpetrator intervention established with 14 research projects completed since 2018. In-flight research projects include 'Improving family violence legal and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men who are perpetrators of family violence' Evaluation of men's behaviour change programs completed in February of 2020: 'A guide for evaluating behaviour change programs for men who use domestic and family violence' Research completed in May 2020: 'Developing LGBTQ programs for perpetrators and victims/survivors of domestic and family violence' Partnership with the Healing Foundation to deliver WorkUp QLD, a workforce planning and development service for the sexual violence, domestic and family violence and women's health and wellbeing sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research that looks at the return on investment of implementing programs, to help practitioners justify funding or choose between interventions Research into how we can better support young people who exposed to domestic, family and sexual violence and the long-term impacts on their wellbeing Guides to provide best practice or suggestions on who to contact for advice when dealing with minority cohorts Research into the barriers for victims seeking support, particularly in light of Covid-19 and the extra dangers women may face from isolation More opportunities to co-design evaluation of programs, so solutions are closer to front-line experiences

Source: stakeholder consults, see Appendix A, Fourth Action Plan Implementation Plan (2020) and ANROWS Project Register, (2020).

5.4 Stakeholder engagement

How effective is ANROWS current engagement with stakeholders, including its connections?

Understanding an organisation's key stakeholders is critical. Proactive engagement and nurturing of these relationships is key to maximising their value. Many of the research and data institutes consulted noted the vast amount of stakeholder engagement they undertook and linked this directly with being able to better address the needs of their stakeholders to create greater impact.

In order for ANROWS to maximise its relationships, it should take a structured approach to stakeholder engagement. This should involve understanding the level of influence and impact certain stakeholder groups have in terms of its longevity as a result of funding, as well as its reputation and impact in terms of meeting stakeholder needs.

Figure 5-3, shows a matrix that can be used to assess the level of engagement a stakeholder requires based on the stakeholders' influence and impact to an organisation. For example, the Department might be classified as a high influence, high impact stakeholder based on its position as a core funder and governance mechanism for ANROWS. In this respect, they would be placed in the "enlist and engage" category, which would require frequent targeted communications and engagement to maintain and foster this relationship.

Consultation participants were complimentary of the individual level relationships they had with ANROWS, with many noting the CEO as a dependable contact they could readily reach out to for advice and support on initiatives. This also extended to the broader team, with consultation participants acknowledging the team can be very helpful in introducing people to the sector and the existing evidence base. Additionally, they stated that the team is helpful in providing guidance on survey design, with a recent example being support of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Personal Safety Survey (PSS).

5.5 A greater focus on its funders and policy makers

The review found that disconnect exists between ANROWS funders, the Commonwealth, states and territories, and its current level of engagement with this group and policy makers. The review found this was important from a funding and policy perspective, as many of these stakeholders reported directly to ministers within relevant cabinet positions. Some government stakeholders noted having contact with ANROWS CEO, while others noted their main mechanism to interact with ANROWS was via the quarterly NPSO meetings held by ANROWS. In many instances, government stakeholders acknowledged often sending a delegate in their place to these meetings. This was owed to the fact they were time-poor and found the meetings to be more of a broadcast rather than strategic in really surfacing or providing a forum to workshop the needs of the Commonwealth, states and territories.

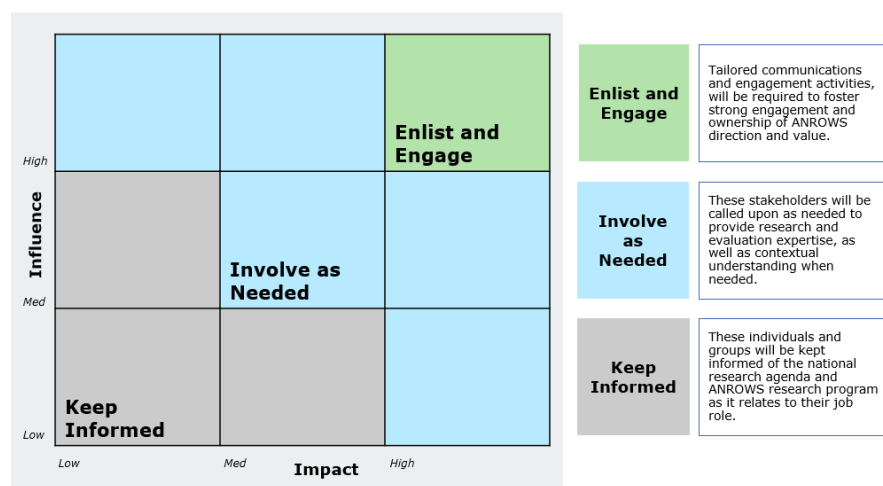
It should be noted that the review prompted government stakeholders to unpack why this might be the case, and to understand if they had broached the topic with ANROWS directly. In most cases, stakeholders noted the teleconference technology was not very conducive to a more collaborative forum. They also admitted not having entered this dialogue with ANROWS, with many noting they had not thought to until prompted through the review. It is clear that a more open and transparent dialogue needs to occur between ANROWS and its government stakeholders.

In line with improving the quarterly NPSO forum, ANROWS also needs to consider the knowledge and policy brokerage role it needs to play. Further, ANROWS should determine how it can best do this on an ongoing basis to build a more intimate knowledge of the needs of the Commonwealth, states and territories. Policy makers who sit outside ANROWS NPSO group are equally important in driving impact through ANROWS research.

Many organisations approach this by having people within their organisation who, in addition to their substantive position, will be allocated a specific stakeholder relationship to own and maintain. This allows the effort to be distributed, and for individuals to build a more in-depth relationship with their stakeholders. This approach also relies on regular

internal forums for staff to share the insights they have gleaned from their respective stakeholders. This enables a picture of the group's collective needs and insights to be seen. This approach would align with many of the other research institutes who noted that they regularly engaged in bi-lateral conversations with jurisdictions and policy makers outside of regular forums. They also looked to convene roundtable discussions on topical issues to bring policy makers together for focussed debate and consultation.

Figure 5-3 Stakeholder engagement matrix



Source: Deloitte (2020).

5.6 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. Consultation participants agreed that ANROWS was fulfilling what they perceived as its role, "to produce evidence that fills the gap."
2. Consultation participants expected ANROWS to shift towards a greater leadership role in the future.
3. Broad alignment exists between ANROWS work and its stakeholders, largely owing to the National Plan as an overarching framework.
4. ANROWS has not understood the importance of its government and policy stakeholders as a pathway to impact, resulting in limited focus and targeting to their needs.

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Initiates more deliberate and focussed engagement with its government funders and policy makers
2. Communicates its strategy more broadly, so that its stakeholders understand its approach and what to expect
3. Forms stronger research coalitions with other research and data institutes, to leverage their expertise in research methods, and create a stronger collective across the research community.

6 Governance, functionality and structure

6.1 About this section

This section reports on ANROWS functions and structure, and how they work together to deliver on ANROWS strategy.

Specifically, this section will address the following review terms of reference:

- the effectiveness of ANROWS governance (including the Board and internal processes) in enabling decision making aligned to its objectives, now and into the future (h)
- the suitability of operating models, including the breadth and appropriateness of strategies used to support research (j)

Why it matters

In order to deliver on its value proposition, an organisation must have a robust governance and functional structure that provides its people with the right amount of autonomy and capability to achieve their objectives.

A lack of cohesion within these elements can result in a lack of accountability, which can often drive unwanted behaviours, focussed on completing tasks rather than the outcomes. A poor functional structure can also inhibit an organisation from achieving its goals and often ends up in duplication and ineffective work practices due to the creation of silos.

6.2 Governance mechanism and organisational accountability

6.2.1 Organisational accountability

The ANROWS Board is ultimately responsible for setting the direction of ANROWS and in holding the ANROWS executive team accountable for delivery.

The review considered the effectiveness of the Board in enabling decision making and how decisions on key governance issues were made.

Board composition:

Under its Constitution and according to the Board Charter and Code of Conduct, the Board is responsible for ensuring that the Company has an appropriate corporate governance structure with appropriate accountability and control systems in place. As part of its role, it is accountable to members for the performance of the Company and has adopted the key responsibilities as outlined in its charter³⁵.

The Board currently meets four times a year, and in the past, has organised out of session meetings where required. The board is made up of a mixture of Commonwealth, independent and state and territory directors. The terms of the members are as follows:

- A chairperson, appointed for a term up to 4 years
- Commonwealth director, appointed for a term of 3 years
- 5 Independent directors, appointed for a term of 4 years
- 3 state/territory directors, appointed for a 2 year term³⁶.

³⁵ ANROWS Board Charter and Code of Conduct (2015).

³⁶ ANROWS Constitution (2017).

According to its charter, members of the Board shall comprise Directors with a range of expertise and a balance of skills and experience. Although not required by the Constitution, the Board considers it desirable that at least one independent Director will have financial expertise consistent with good governance practice³⁷.

A Board Skills Matrix is used to ascertain which of the Board's list of potential candidates may be appointed as independent directors. The current matrix, shown in Figure 6-1, shows the criteria required across the board's independent directors.

Current membership of the board shows that all directors possess senior management experience, with two having specific financial expertise. All members satisfied the generic requirements. Other considerations are also met with two board directors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and two others with culturally and linguistic diverse heritage or knowledge. Of the independent directors only one is male, with the other four females. Board members noted there could be more male representation on the board. Assessment of potential candidates against the criteria is taken on face value, with no explicit proof or evidence of achievement required.

Figure 6-1 ANROWS Board skills matrix

Source	Criteria
ANROWS Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management experience • Must not be employed by Commonwealth or state and territory governments of Australia • At least 2 Directors with research expertise in the fields of sexual assault or DV
Board charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one Director with financial expertise

³⁷ ANROWS Board Charter and Code of Conduct (2015).

Source	Criteria
Generic requirements for ANROWS Board Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning experience • Preferably some understanding of research • Evidence of a commitment to human rights and social justice principles
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Director • Geographic diversity • At least one Director with culturally and linguistic diverse heritage or knowledge • Appropriate gender balance • If required, one skills gap position

Source: ANROWS (2020).

The Board is empowered to make many decisions, including approval of contracts with government funders and annual budgets, plus any budgetary decisions over \$100,000.

These particular responsibilities should warrant a confident level of financial acumen and experience, to provide guidance and management experience to ANROWS.

Board composition findings:

The review finds that the composition of the ANROWS board is not unusual for an organisation of this type, though there are some peculiarities that added to the complexity of the structure.

For example, there was some discussion from consultation participants that the Board composition impacted on Board effectiveness from a continuity perspective. This is due to state and territory representatives being rotated every 2 years. The review heard some support for constitutional change that would provide for longer terms for Board members to improve continuity.

There were also some views regarding the membership composition of the Board and allocation of four representative positions for Commonwealth, state and territory officials. Representative boards are also not unusual either in 'government company' structures or for not-for-profit organisations more generally. A key motivation for representative board composition is to ensure Board decisions reflect the perspectives of key stakeholders. The review notes that a majority of Board members are independent, non-representative positions (though ANROWS itself has identified criteria on top of its constitution to guide the appointment of directors³⁸).

Board design and composition was an important consideration when ANROWS was established, and reflected that the Commonwealth, states and territories are members of the Company and also provide significant core funding for ANROWS. As established in Section 3.4, the funding profile of ANROWS remains largely unchanged since inception. Further, policy makers within jurisdictions are considered a key stakeholder and lynchpin in ANROWS value proposition. Therefore, the representative nature of the Board, seems reasonable in the circumstances, especially given that representative positions are a minority of total positions.

In summary, the review recognises the challenges around board continuity and membership but believes that as long as the other key factors of board effectiveness exist, these challenges can be overcome.

Board culture and effectiveness:

Effective boards are the strategic custodians of an organisation's value proposition and require the right mix of skills, knowledge and teaming to ensure the delivery of that value.

The factors that are critical to board effectiveness are³⁹:

- Culture of mutual respect, honesty and openness that encourages constructive debate

- Diversity of experience, styles, thought and, as far as possible, age and gender
- A strong working relationship with the CEO and senior management
- Common purpose and strategic clarity
- An experienced chair
- Efficient board structure and process, including committees, board papers, information flow and a good company secretary.

The scope for his review has not sought to complete a deep assessment of board effectiveness. However, significant strengths of the ANROWS Board are clear, including diverse representation, a common purpose, experienced chair and good relationship with the CEO. There are also a number of subcommittees that are aligned to risk areas relevant to ANROWS (constitution and conflict of interest management committee, finance, risk and audit committee).

However, in conversations with Board members, a number of issues were raised that suggest the Board is not operating as effectively as possible:

- A culture of 'politeness' on the Board was stifling some important conversations from occurring and questions being posed
- A lack of strategic clarity was noted with the Board as a whole unable to articulate a common understanding of ANROWS value proposition.
- This was also demonstrated by some Board members indicating that they were not entirely sure of the scope of their role and how much understanding of ANROWS operations they should have
- Relatively low levels of delegation meant that the Board was asked to be involved in operational decision making on research projects, for example approval of individual research projects and to be involved in a range of operational decisions.

The review noted that while the effectiveness of all Boards is critical, the structure of ANROWS board as a governance mechanism means it has a significant role. This includes the strategic direction of ANROWS and some

³⁸ See Figure 6-1 ANROWS Board skills matrix

³⁹ Australian Institute of Company Directors (2016).

of its larger operational decisions linked to its strategy. The size of its role means having a board that is focused, demonstrates clear understanding of ANROWS strategy and is proactive in raising concerns is imperative to the overall growth and success of ANROWS.

The review found that issues raised by Board members was of concern, and not in fitting with the sizeable role the Board has been designed to play. Also an issue was the unfamiliarity of some of its key strategies and processes. The review found this was not attributable to any one Board member but is the collective responsibility of all Board members to help solve.

Discussions with Board members for this review, occurred recently after the Board had engaged its own process to reset the strategic direction of ANROWS. It was clear that this process had a positive impact on the Board. The Board agreed that they had a clearer sense of needing to pivot to the needs of policy makers and the importance of the national research agenda as defining the boundaries of its core value proposition⁴⁰.

It will take some time to reap the benefits of this and for the Board and ANROWS to agree what they need to do and achieve to make those things a success. Therefore, it is critical that the Board and individual Board members create a culture of debate and challenge to ensure that there is collective understanding about the pivot that ANROWS is making.

6.2.1.1 Key governance risk issues and information flow

The Board is expected to safeguard ANROWS value proposition and govern the delivery of its strategy. Without the necessary flow of information, it is difficult for the Board to execute this role.

Lack of a formal performance measurement framework linked to the strategy means the Board has not formally agreed the measures of success and evidence used to hold the CEO and senior management team to account. This exposes the Board and the organisation to risk and opens

⁴⁰ These views were referenced in the recent Port Jackson Partners review, which recommended to refresh the national research agenda as a priority and to

them up to questions of why their funding has gone to certain things and not others and how these relate to their impact and identified goals.

In addition, the review found there were a number of key issues that were important from a governance perspective where the Board should have more involvement in ensuring appropriate operational mechanisms are in place. These include:

- The setting of clear and transparent criteria by which the ANROWS team can use to judge and assess the body of research as a whole and individual research projects
- The use of experts, to help the Board and the executive team make decisions, including ensuring that the peer review bodies had the right subject matter expertise, and that the Board could rely on the advice of experts
- Ethical considerations of the research program and how these are debated and resolved while also supporting research evolution, innovation and the use of new or different methodologies.

6.3 Functions of national research bodies

What functions are required to support a national research body?

ANROWS ability to function effectively and deliver on its value proposition is heavily reliant on the structure and capabilities of its people. Therefore, the review sought to understand what functions are necessary for ANROWS to deliver on its value proposition, and the attributes outlined in Section 2.4.1.

To inform this, the review analysed the functions of several leading Australian and international research and data institutes. The review also referenced the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) report *Securing Australia's Future – Skills and capabilities for Australian enterprise innovation (2016)*. Funded by the ARC, the report focused on how Australia's high-performing enterprises identify, manage, build and

contemplate weighting projects that have a clear implication for policy and/or practice design. Port Jackson Partners (2020).

mix technical capabilities with innovation to enable them to maximise their opportunities.

Based on this information, the review established the core capabilities required to deliver on the national research attributes. These were then grouped together to create the core functions that were found to enable a national research body and that were applicable to ANROWS and its constitution. These are set out in Figure 6-2. It should be noted that the functions are intentionally different to the attributes. Attributes describe characteristics of an organisation, whereas functions provide a grouping of the capabilities required for an organisation to deliver on its strategy.

Figure 6-2 Core functions of national research bodies



Source: Deloitte (2020), Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) (2016) and stakeholder consults, see Appendix A.

ANROWS current functions and their structure were considered against these functions. This provides clarity on how ANROWS is structured today and how it might better align itself in the future to enable it to pivot to the key attributes outlined in Section 2.4.1.

It should be noted that many of these functions will be considered a departure from a traditional research institute or arm that might sit within an academic institution. This is deliberate and backed by the views of many of the research and data institutes we spoke to, who referenced this departure as the key to enabling their transformations and having greater impact on policy service design.

Figure 6-3, provides an indication of ANROWS alignment to this functional structure. There are clear gaps and opportunities for ANROWS to seek further alignment. It should be noted an organisation of ANROWS size (it currently employs 32 people) would not be expected to have seven discrete functions. Rather, ANROWS should have a hybrid of these functions across its structure, with individuals equipped with the right capabilities to enable these functions.

ANROWS should align its functions with those suggested in Figure 6-3 so that it may deliver on its value proposition. To be most effective, this should be done in tandem with structural and capability changes that will be explored in the following sections.

Figure 6-3 ANROWS alignment to functions of a national research body

Function	Description	Alignment to ANROWS current functions
Research leadership	Team or individuals with the ability to lead the conversation on the critical questions that research needs to answer, with a focus on emerging trends to ensure agenda remains relevant and forward-thinking.	■ Some alignment – discrete research function exists within ANROWS and is highly regarded across the sector as a model for how research should be commissioned. Opportunities exist to explore new methods of research and research into emerging areas.
Knowledge translation	Team or individuals responsible for the synthesis, exchange and application of knowledge so that stakeholders may apply it to policy and practice.	✓ Alignment exists – discrete knowledge translation function exists within ANROWS.
Development and innovation	Team or individuals who drive the implementation of new or significantly improved services or processes, as well as new organisational methods in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.	✗ Poor alignment – no discrete or embedded development and innovation capability currently exists at ANROWS. Implementation of new methods is often instigated by researchers and its funders.
Research stewardship	Team or individuals charged with upholding high standards of research quality and integrity that is supported by innovative approaches and research that strives to make impact.	✓ Alignment exists – discrete research function exists within ANROWS and forms the majority of its focus. Opportunity exists for broader application of research methods and outcomes focus to drive more measurable impact.
Stakeholder engagement	Team or individuals who continuously engage and integrate with policy makers and stakeholders to provide a policy lens and facilitate knowledge exchange and research coalitions.	■ Some alignment – no discrete stakeholder engagement function, however individuals are responsible for the management of individual stakeholders and forums. Opportunity exists to build capability within the senior management team to alleviate the reliance on its CEO.
Subject matter, sector experience and intersectionality	Team or individuals with an understanding of the sector and a background or direct experience of minority cohorts impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence.	■ Some alignment – no discrete function exists, however many of the individuals within the team were praised by stakeholders for their experience and understanding of the sector, the practice of research and minority cohorts such as ATSI.
Program management	Team or individuals dedicated to the management of ANROWS projects with respect to delivery, risk management, financials and commercial awareness, and general planning.	■ Some alignment – current program management responsibilities are spread across the research and strategic operations teams.

Source: Deloitte (2020), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)(2017) and stakeholder consults, see Appendix A.

6.4 Operating model and structure

How effective is ANROWS current operating model and structure?

In 2014 ANROWS created a conceptual model structured around three core intersecting functions (as shown in Figure 6-4) to efficiently achieve their strategic goals. The intersection of these functions enables ANROWS to produce and disseminate research. ANROWS operations, including core grant budget allocation, reflect this conceptual model plus organisational costs (e.g. board, office management, etc.). Corporate overheads are distributed across the four functional areas. While the model aligns in most part to its organisational structure, it is unclear what capabilities sit under the “leadership” function and how these are delivered across the organisation.

Figure 6-4 ANROWS Conceptual model



Source: ANROWS Annual Report (2018-19).

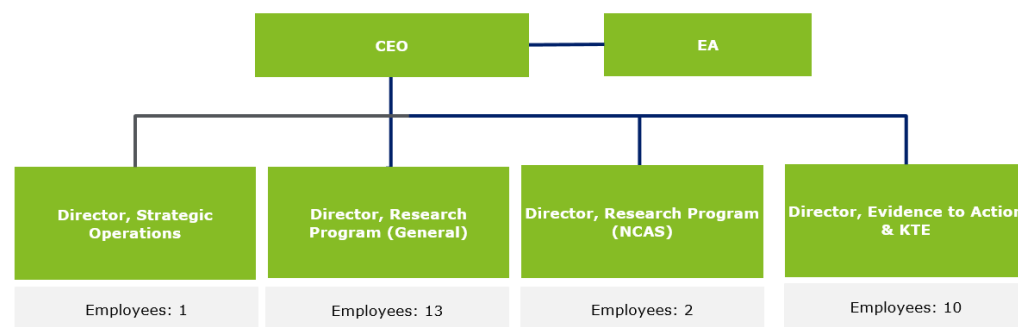
Complementing this model, is ANROWS organisation structure, which is largely structured according to its projects and funding. This has resulted in discrete functions that manage research and delivery of the NCAS

survey. These teams are then complemented with a Strategic Operations function and separate knowledge translation function who work across the organisation.

Overall, ANROWS employs 32 people, with its largest teams being its research team (14 people) and its knowledge translation team (11 people). The structure of the teams is relatively flat, with the Director of the research stream having 10 direct reports. This is quite a lot of direct reports to manage, particularly for an organisation this small.

During consultations, it was noted that this would be an interim arrangement over three to four months, allowing the Director to get to know the team’s strengths and capabilities. From there, decisions would be made as to how the structure might be revised to potentially create sub-teams allowing for more autonomy within the team. This would also free the Director’s time to better support the CEO and the rest of the team in a more strategic capacity.

Figure 6-5 ANROWS organisational structure (As of July 2020)



Source: ANROWS (2020)

ANROWS current structure allows it to create functions as funding is secured and, equally, to flex down at the end of a funding agreement. While this structure might seem logical from the perspective of causing little disruption to the wider organisation when funding ceases, it is also

having the unintended consequence of not providing ANROWS with the capability to build long-term capacity within the team. While such a model might work in certain industries where projects are short-term or tasks are repetitive, ANROWS work has neither of these characteristics.

Instead, to enable maturity, ANROWS must:

- increasingly invest in establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with stakeholders
- undertaking research that is incremental and consistently building on its previous iteration
- developing general strategic capability

This will require ANROWS to implement strategies over a long period of time. If staff are consistently leaving organisation until mid-way through these types of tasks, this can lead to a significant loss of momentum and considerable re-work when a new member enters the organisation. Continuous turnover of staff can create a real inertia to achieving transformation, and can also discourage stakeholders from engaging if they feel their efforts may need to be repeated in quick succession due to churn.

In addition, the review found ANROWS structure has created silos, with individuals often having a narrow focus. This can be detrimental to the growth of smaller organisations, as they often need their people taking on multiple roles to enable maximised resources and growth. Placing people into narrow functions with very specific roles can limit their ability to think more broadly and develop other skills that can be essential to the organisation. For example, stakeholders from other research institutes noted that it was critical for researchers to develop policy and knowledge brokering skills, rather than this being the discrete responsibility of another function within an organisation. A departure from the traditional academic model, it was seen as pivotal that researchers are able to engage more deeply with policy makers and own these relationships. This helps to enrich the research and, where appropriate, enables co-designing the research approach.

Today, the responsibility to understand the needs of policy makers largely falls to ANROWS knowledge translation function, with researchers

predominately focused on the research itself and the eventual output. This has led to a way of working on the part of researchers where they feel little accountability to create research that is useful and impactful.

Overall, the review found that ANROWS current structure is ultimately limited by its short-term lens and poor alignment to its strategy, as can be seen in Figure 6-5. This is limiting its ability to respond to changing needs and cutting off opportunities for staff to stay on or be re-purposed once their projects cease. Such an approach can also be generally demotivating for staff, as they are unable to see clear pathways to progress and develop their talents. This also means any learnings and expertise they do develop at ANROWS is soon to be lost by the organisation once their project is complete and they leave the organisation.

It is recommended that ANROWS restructures its organisation to more closely align with enabling its strategy. The structure should be focused on creating long-term growth for the organisation and pathways for its staff to grow and diversify their skills. This will be increasingly important for its academic staff, as the nature of academic roles outside of academic institutions starts to shift more broadly towards implementation and knowledge and policy brokerage. It should also look to understand how it can integrate the pool of researchers it works with, so that ANROWS can impart values and behaviours to them that reflect the type of research approaches for which they'd like to be recognised.

To design its new structure, ANROWS should consider the following elements of organisational design:

High-level design

1. Complete development of its 2020-23 strategic plan, so that it may understand what organisational/structural implications exist to deliver the strategy
2. Collate a baseline of its existing current state organisation and look at similar organisations for benchmarking purposes. To support this step, the review has included a current state baseline, and examples of other research institute organisational structures for benchmarking purposes (see Appendix E).

3. Develop design principles, a set of principles to translate its strategy into guiding parameters for the design of the future org. An example of a design principle is “the new organisation will drive decision-making to the lowest logical point”.
4. Develop a new high-level conceptual model⁴¹ that shows the main functions and how these will work together. This should then be tested against scenarios of key processes to see if the functions are sufficient to deliver the processes.
5. Define what each function will do, and the top team (usually, CEO and direct reports aligned to new functions).

Detailed design and implementation

Once the high-level design is agreed, the next steps include:

1. Detailed organisational charts and job descriptions
2. Design of capability and skills framework to support staff to move to the new functional model
3. Development of a people transition plan, including a communication strategy and plan
4. Roll-out of the people transition plan to the new structure.

6.5 Decision making

How appropriate are ANROWS decision-making mechanisms?

Closely related to an organisation’s structure is its decision-making ability and the controls in place to facilitate both decision making and risk management. A careful balance needs to be struck with providing people autonomy to make decisions and ensuring they have the right skills, motivations and experience to make decisions in the best interest of the organisation.

At ANROWS, most day-to-day operations are managed by its CEO and her management team. These individuals are entrusted to make decisions that facilitate ANROWS key processes, such as commissioning and conducting

research and disseminating this knowledge across their channels. At each step of these processes, ANROWS is reliant on external governance mechanisms to make final decisions. For example, ANROWS manages the priority setting process, and will collate stakeholder feedback and conduct evidence mapping to understand evidence gaps. Once it is confident of what priorities should be addressed. These and the corresponding projects it might conduct are then approved by its Board.

Similarly, for its open grants, the selection of researchers to conduct these and scrutiny of the research approach, are assessed by a peer review panel⁴². This panel then makes recommendations to ANROWS CEO and Director for Research Programs, who then evaluate the recommendations and provide these to the Board for decision. In both examples, ANROWS is charged with facilitating the processes around these decisions, which includes arming them with the necessary information to make an informed decision. However, ultimately, they are not the final decision makers.

The review noted that this way of working can lead to a focus on the process, rather than the outcome. This is due to ANROWS being solely responsible for facilitating these processes rather than being accountable for the actual outcome itself.

While the review notes these decision-making mechanisms may be appropriate, opportunity does exist to create a more meaningful dialogue between ANROWS and its external governance bodies. This may enable more involvement, and hence create increased feeling of accountability for the decisions that are made.

One suggestion for how this might be done, is to introduce more transparency on the outcomes of decisions and why these decisions have been made. This transparency should inevitably create more accountability within the ANROWS team as the “face” to many of their stakeholders. Therefore, it will be in their interest to ensure the processes that lead to decisions being made are of the highest quality, and they have a vested

⁴¹ Conceptual models show how functions will be organised to deliver an organisations strategy. These could be organised around customers, products, a process, geography or a mixture, which results in a matrix model.

⁴² Peer review panel primarily consists of policy makers and academics with relevant expertise and no conflict of interest.

interest in the outcomes, if not for the sole reason of being able to reasonably defend decisions to their stakeholders.

For example, outcomes of the priority setting process in setting the national research agenda could be released on their website and publicised through channels such as Notepad. This would allow stakeholders to gain an insight into the rigour of the process, the long list of priorities and why certain priorities were selected over others. It would also mean any questions or concerns are likely to go directly to the ANROWS team, rather than its board, meaning the team would have to be across and have a level of comfort with the decisions made to manage their stakeholders.

6.6 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. The board is not operating as effectively as possible, with some members unclear on their roles and responsibilities.
2. The board is required to sign off budgetary decisions above \$100k. With the large majority of ANROWS projects above this threshold, the board is often involved in operational matters.
3. ANROWS current functions and structure are organised according to its projects and funding, creating little agility for it to grow and be more responsive to stakeholder needs.
4. Processes such as the awarding of grants are set up in a way that does not always drive internal accountability for the outcome, with ANROWS facilitating the process and able to lean on the peer review network to make final decisions.

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Clarifies the role and responsibilities of its board members, including new ways of working are established to encourage openness and constructive debate.
2. Makes a deliberate effort to recruit board members with fundraising and investment experience and deeper financial expertise to explore longer-term funding opportunities.
3. Moves towards a functional model that compliments its strong research leadership with innovation, and stakeholder engagement functions.

7 Organisation and people

7.1 About this section

This section reports on ANROWS organisational capability and how its capabilities allow it to deliver on its strategy, as well as responding to the needs of its stakeholders.

Specifically, this section will address the following review terms of reference:

- whether current capabilities and staff resourcing profiles are appropriate and aligned to new and emerging research and operational priorities (j)
- broad consideration of the resourcing impact of any adjustment to the current approach (l)

Why it matters

Organisations cannot achieve their strategy if they do not have the right collective skills, abilities and experience. ANROWS can be characterised as having deep capability and experience in research and domestic, family and sexual violence.

To move towards the role of a national research body as described in Section 2.4, ANROWS will need to consider the broader set of capabilities it should build to have greater impact and remain relevant.

7.2 Capabilities of national research bodies Are ANROWS current capabilities appropriate?

In order for the core functions outlined in Section 6.3 to be successful, they must be underpinned by corresponding capabilities. These capabilities – the collective skills, abilities and expertise of an organisation – represent the ways that people and resources are brought together to deliver on an organisation’s strategy and value proposition. Capabilities can be separated into three categories⁴³, as set out in Figure 7-1.

Figure 7-1 Three types of organisational capabilities



Source: Deloitte (2020).

Understanding which category your capabilities are linked to can help with prioritising investment and development into capabilities.

⁴³ Deloitte (2020).

However, in time, investment into all three categories is key to creating a balanced organisation that delivers unique value to its stakeholders.

Figure 7-2 outlines the key capabilities required of ANROWS to deliver on the attributes outlined in Section 2.4.1 that looks at the role of national research bodies. These capabilities must also enable ANROWS to deliver on future approaches to its research production and dissemination, as outlined in Section 4.2.4.

Clear capability gaps exist in order for ANROWS to realise its value proposition and shift towards a new way of working. These gaps are largely born out of ANROWS tendency to operate as a traditional research institution tied to an academic institute, rather than a stand-alone body with a wider national role in the sector. Figure 7-2 provides a high-level assessment of the alignment of these capabilities to ANROWS current organisational capability set. A more thorough diagnostic that looks at the organisation and individual capabilities would be recommended.

ANROWS ability to build these capabilities to support its value proposition and strategy is key to its success and maintaining relevance within the sector.

Looking ahead to these capabilities, it is recommended that ANROWS engages with its staff to share its ambitions and the capabilities it is looking to foster and develop. These transparent conversations will help ANROWS to understand where there are opportunities to develop its own people who may have an interest or complimentary skills and experience already. It will also help ANROWS understand any short to medium-term deficiencies it may face and whether these might be better suited to being outsourced through its research program.

The review also found a willingness from many of the research and data institutes consulted to collaborate with ANROWS and assist them on this journey. Pairing ANROWS staff with staff from these institutes on particular projects would be a good way to foster these capabilities and leverage these existing relationships.

These conversations should form the initial stage of ANROWS creation of a capability uplift plan. Key elements of the plan would include:

1. Assessment of the suggested capability matrix in Figure 7-2 to ensure alignment with its future strategy and objectives
2. A diagnostic to help ANROWS assess its skill gaps at the organisational and individual level. This could be heavily informed by its initial conversations with staff.
3. An action plan to:
 - a. implement structural changes to its functions, see Section 6.4, should the diagnostic uncover better ways of grouping capabilities under specific functions
 - b. design and deliver learning to address individual capability needs
 - c. where capability is completely missing, a view to how recruitment now and into the future may be able to fill these gaps
4. Alignment of capability building to its strategic objectives, so that capability uplift can be measured, and there is buy-in from staff to work in new ways to deliver on ANROWS value proposition.

Figure 7-2 Capability matrix for a national research body

Function	Corresponding capabilities	Capability type	Alignment to ANROWS current capabilities
Research leadership	The capability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct horizon scanning to understand emerging research topics and approaches • Influence agendas and paradigms • Lead research that supports an uplift in research excellence • Promote the work of its organisation to uplift brand and research credibility • Set priorities aligned to stakeholder needs and national frameworks such as the National Plan 	Strategic	■ Some alignment – limited horizon scanning is currently conducted; however considerable research capability exists to support the delivery of high quality research that is well received by the sector.
Knowledge translation	The capability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design materials and approaches tailored for the customer • Demonstrate an evidence to policy and practice mindset • Measure and track the impact of their research • Generate and share thought leadership • Design and maintain an effective and easy to use website • Undertake PR & Communications to promote their value proposition • Organise and deliver events, including the biennial conference • Practice implementation science or systems thinking 	Core	✓ Alignment exists – discrete knowledge translation capability exists within ANROWS. Existing mechanisms to measure its effectiveness could be improved, with a focus on measurement capability. No discrete implementation science or systems thinking capability exists.
Development and innovation	The capability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure its performance against tangible success criteria • Seek continuous improvement opportunities • Select and pursue “Discovery” research • Generate and foster new ideas • Create new research methods and approaches • Ability to conduct trials and test evidence 	Strategic	✗ Poor alignment – no formal performance measures, discrete or embedded development and innovation capability currently exists at ANROWS.

Function	Corresponding capabilities	Capability type	Alignment to ANROWS current capabilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise failure fast and course correct • Feasibility analysis 		
Research stewardship	<p>The capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage research projects and the commissioning process • Deliver and uphold excellence in research practice • Conduct research synthesis and meta-analysis • Translate international evidence for application within an Australian context • Manage data and its integrity, including data sovereignty • Analyse data and draw meaningful insights to inform new and existing research • Scale and diversify in planning, applying and securing research funding • Deliver high-quality traditional and non- traditional research output • Conduct ethical research 	Core	<p>✓ Alignment exists – discrete research function exists within ANROWS and forms the majority of its focus. Opportunity exists for broader application of quantitative research methods and outcomes focus to drive more measurable impact. Consultation participants from other institutions noted researchers with experience in emerging methods were hard to find in Australia.</p>
Stakeholder engagement	<p>The capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with stakeholders on a strategic level for maximum impact • Manage a portfolio of projects or stakeholder needs • Seek, create and foster partnerships and research coalitions • Understand the policy context and communicate and broker how ANROWS work fits within this context • Manage the reputation of research • Manage competing stakeholder needs 	Strategic	<p>■ Some alignment – capability to manage stakeholder contact and interactions exists. Capabilities to build long-term strategic partnerships and research coalitions is lacking.</p>
Subject matter, sector experience and intersectionality	<p>The capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand diverse lived experience • Develop new researchers with new perspectives and methodologies 	Foundational	<p>■ Some alignment – limited diversity amongst the team itself in terms of representation from minority cohorts, however many of the individuals within the team were praised by stakeholders for their</p>

Function	Corresponding capabilities	Capability type	Alignment to ANROWS current capabilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the intersections of domestic, sexual and family violence with other areas such as health, gambling, imprisonment etc. Practice Indigenous-led knowledge and research Work with minority groups such as CALD and LGBTQI in a way that is sensitive to their unique experiences 		experience and understanding of the sector, the practice of research and minority cohorts such as ATSI. The team also utilises advisory groups with representatives from minority cohorts to aid in the appropriateness of its research.
Program management	<p>The capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage projects to a high quality, budget and timeframe Generate reports for use in decision making Forward plan, including resource management, to minimise disruption Understand different commercial models and what will work best for a project or situation Manage risks, to minimise reputational harm Manage organisational budgets, forecasting and subsequent payment schedules so funding may be used as effectively as possible 	Foundational	<p>■ Some alignment – program management capability exists to manage ANROWS existing research program. Opportunities exist for a greater focus on outcomes and measurement, to drive different behaviours and more impact through ANROWS work.</p>

Source: Deloitte (2020), ACOLA (2016) and stakeholder consultations, Appendix A.

7.3 Enabling new and emerging research

What capabilities and staff models are needed to enable new and emerging approaches?

As explored in Section 4.2.4, the review found that a large proportion of ANROWS research had a qualitative focus.

In consulting with research organisations that used more quantitative approaches (e.g. the ABS, Campbell Collaboration), it was found that ANROWS should consider developing and commissioning new research mechanisms in the future. These recommendations and their rationale are outlined in Figure 4-4.

This shift needs to include specific capabilities such as the ability to conduct trials, experience and knowledge of the ethical implications of trials and capability to conduct systematic reviews and meta-analysis. These capabilities should also be complemented by capability in implementation science or systems thinking to help bridge the gap between research and practice.

Many of the research institutes consulted noted the difficulty in finding this expertise within Australia, with a reliance on partnerships with the US and UK to help bridge these gaps. They also noted that this expertise is more prevalent in areas like health, rather than social policy.

In the long-term, ANROWS could look to develop this capability in-house to provide a unique differentiator to its competitors who you might consider academic institutions or consultancies. In the short-term, ANROWS could look to form partnerships with international institutions who are well-practiced and experienced in these methods. These collaborations could provide good working opportunities for ANROWS staff

to learn, and for ANROWS to generally test the methods and their applicability to solving Australia's policy questions.

If proven successful, over time, ANROWS' in-house capability should see a natural shift and evolution to these more quantitative methods.

7.4 Organisational agility

With the timing of the review coinciding with the advent of Covid-19, it was difficult for consultation participants not to scrutinise the absence of a response from ANROWS on the impacts of coronavirus on domestic, family and sexual violence. Some consultation participants expected ANROWS to lead the response and others were more divided as to whether ANROWS had the capability to do so. While ANROWS did publish an update via its Notepad channel, participants remarked that the response was slow. Participants also stated that they expected ANROWS to commission its own piece of work owing to its national position and access to research resources and stakeholders who could provide commentary. In comparison, the AIC was able to conduct a survey in May that sampled 15,000 women from across Australia to understand the prevalence of domestic violence during the pandemic. Results have now been released, showing that physical or sexual violence against women from a current or former cohabiting partner had worsened since the pandemic. Two-thirds of women who experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former cohabiting partner stated that since the start of the pandemic, the violence had started or escalated in the three months prior to the survey⁴⁴. Similarly, Monash University surveyed 166 family violence victim support practitioners to understand the early impacts of the pandemic on domestic violence in Victoria during a four-week period from the end of April into May⁴⁵.

While neither survey can be said to be extensive or representative of the general Australian population⁴⁶, each approach is a pragmatic and

(age, usual place of residence) and inviting participants who fell within these quotas. This method is different to those that sample a random selection of the population, AIC (2020).

⁴⁴ Australian Institute of Criminology (2020).

⁴⁵ Monash University (2020).

⁴⁶ Sampling of the survey was conducted using the proportional quota sampling method. This involved setting quotas based on known population characteristics

relatively quick response to an urgent issue, providing insights that policy makers and practitioners can use to adjust their approaches. It has also provided a basis for other research institutes to build upon. For example, the AIC survey found that one in three women who had experienced violence and wanted to seek support had not done so due to concerns for their safety. This has sparked interest from many groups to understand what alternative methods to calling for help victims might be able to pursue.

The review found this distinction was important to make, as ANROWS research is often lengthy and extensive, contributing to its highly regarded nature. Their preference for this type of research, has made it difficult for them to respond quickly to events and has created a reluctance for ANROWS to utilise research methods it feels are not as thorough for use to provide comment on.

Both government and non-government stakeholders agreed there was a role for both types of research, and encouraged ANROWS to pursue more short-term methods that might help them to respond more rapidly to events, but also the needs of policy makers and ministers.

7.5 Findings and recommendations

The review found:

1. ANROWS has deep capability and experience in research and domestic, family and sexual violence.
2. Current capabilities are fit for an academic institute but need to be broader for a stand-alone research institute with a national role.
3. Attracting the right talent, with highly sought-after skills in the market, may be difficult for ANROWS owing to its flat structure and funding uncertainty.
4. ANROWS preference for longer, more thorough methods of research, can stifle its ability to respond to point in time issues and stakeholder asks.

Therefore, the review recommends ANROWS:

1. Invest in wider organisational capabilities, such as innovation and stakeholder engagement that align more closely with a national research body.
2. Builds capability in emerging research methods, such as systematic reviews and randomised trials and more agile approaches to remain relevant and create impact.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Stakeholders consulted

Figure 7-3 Consultations by group

Group	Consultations
ANROWS Senior Management team	6
ImpEG	10
Researchers	12
ANROWS Board	9
Practitioners and policy makers	12
Benchmarking organisations	6
Total	55

Consultations to date, as of 24/08/2020.

Appendix B: Summary of findings and recommendations

Focus Area	Findings	Recommendations
Value proposition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of ANROWS value proposition has been limited due to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a lack of clarity on policy makers as their primary stakeholder, and in setting and delivering research that is appropriate for a national research organisation a lack of clarity on stakeholder issues and ability to communicate its benefit. Consultation participants identified the importance of an organisation like ANROWS and the commitment from the government to fund such an organisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pivots its value proposition to meeting the needs of policy makers and leverages its unique position as a national research institute by embedding the attributes listed above.
Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ANROWS objectives are durable and relevant. ANROWS has created its own operational strategic plan to provide further direction and purpose to its objectives. There is an absence of clear performance measures for ANROWS to measure achievement against its objectives or strategy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create a clearer set of strategic goals, which are measurable, specific and time bound. Sets clear performance measures and metrics to show how it is achieving against its strategy and objectives.
Priority setting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The priority setting process did not always yield “priorities”, but instead a list of specific “projects”. A reliance on familiar stakeholders to input into the process, which is inhibiting innovation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh its national research agenda, with transparent communication of priorities and process to get there. ANROWS works with its board and some of its funders to establish a criteria to assess research priorities against. Engage with a broader set of stakeholders to surface new ideas and new approaches to research. Conducts regular scanning of the environment to keep ahead of trends
Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of ANROWS funding is focused towards its research. ANROWS has increased its additional funding sources, outside of its core grants administered by the Commonwealth, states and territories. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continues to seek additional funding from other sources, including philanthropic funding and the private sector Investigates the possibility of starting a futures fund to diversify its income stream and provide funding for future projects

Focus Area	Findings	Recommendations
	3. A cautious approach to planning further than its grant cycle, in fear of loss of funding.	3. Exploration of different funding models to promote flexibility and long-term planning to better meet objectives of ANROWS and its funders
Research and knowledge approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ANROWS produces a wide array of research and materials for its stakeholders to use. 2. A responsiveness to stakeholder feedback, with many recent improvements to the accessibility of their knowledge translation materials. 3. A focus on practitioner guidelines, with less of a focus on tailored materials for policy makers 4. A long history of qualitative research, with little quantitative research or conducting of trials to really understand what works 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creates a dialogue with policy makers to better understand their needs and usefulness of their research and approach 2. Engages with those “outside the tent” to build capability to conduct more quantitative, implementation focused research 3. Focuses on conducting fewer, but larger research projects to help ANROWS to more effectively manage a smaller portfolio of projects at any one time
Research impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ANROWS has made concerted effort to conduct research that considers priority populations, aligned to the National Plan. 2. The lack of clarity of policy makers as a key stakeholder, means ANROWS has not targeted its feedback mechanisms to this group. 3. Policy makers could not draw direct links between research and their work, where practitioners could. 4. Current NPSO and PEG forums tended to be one-way channels and this limited their effectiveness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishes a link between its work and impact on policy and measures that impact 2. Prioritises broader research methods as a way to progress research across the sector and to build evidence on “what works”
Stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation participants agreed that ANROWS was fulfilling what they perceived as its role, “to produce evidence that fills the gap.” 2. Consultation participants expected ANROWS to shift towards a greater leadership role in the future. 3. Broad alignment exists between ANROWS work and its stakeholders, largely owing to the National Plan as an overarching framework. 4. ANROWS has not understood the importance of its government and policy stakeholders as a pathway to impact, resulting in limited focus and targeting to their needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiates more deliberate and focussed engagement with its government funders and policy makers 2. Communicates its strategy more broadly, so that its stakeholders understand its approach and what to expect 3. Forms stronger research coalitions with other research and data institutes, to leverage their expertise in research methods, and create a stronger collective across the research community.

Focus Area	Findings	Recommendations
Governance, functionality and structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board is not operating as effectively as possible, with some members unclear on their roles and responsibilities. 2. The board is required to sign off budgetary decisions above \$100k. With the large majority of ANROWS projects above this threshold, the board is often involved in operational matters. 3. ANROWS current functions and structure are organised according to its projects and funding, creating little agility for it to grow and be more responsive to stakeholder needs. 4. Processes such as the awarding of grants are set up in a way that does not always drive internal accountability for the outcome, with ANROWS facilitating the process and able to lean on the peer review network to make final decisions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarifies the role and responsibilities of its board members, including the new ways of working are established to encourage openness and constructive debate. 2. Makes a deliberate effort to recruit board members with fundraising and investment experience and deeper financial expertise to explore longer-term funding opportunities. 3. Moves towards a functional model that compliments its strong research leadership with innovation, and stakeholder engagement functions.
Organisation and people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ANROWS has deep capability and experience in research and domestic, family and sexual violence. 2. Current capabilities are fit for an academic institute but need to be broader for a stand-alone research institute with a national role. 3. Attracting the right talent, with highly sought-after skills in the market, may be difficult for ANROWS owing to its flat structure and funding uncertainty. 4. ANROWS preference for longer, more thorough methods of research, can stifle its ability to respond to point in time issues and stakeholder asks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invest in wider organisational capabilities, such as innovation and stakeholder engagement that align more closely with a national research body. 2. Builds capability in emerging research methods, such as systematic reviews and randomised trials and more agile approaches to remain relevant and create impact.

Appendix C: PICO Framework

Box 2. Formulating answerable research questions using PICO*

P	population	The group of interest may be a population, a community or individuals. Consider how the group can best be described (e.g. age, gender, health status, setting) and whether any sub-groups are of particular interest.
I	intervention	Interventions may be at an individual or population level. Interventions cover a wide range of activities from drug treatments and other clinical therapies to education, counselling and lifestyle modification programs, approaches to service provision, regulation and legislation, and environmental health interventions.
C	comparison	The comparison intervention may be no intervention, another intervention or standard care/ practice. Note that in some situations a comparison may not be necessary, such as where the question relates to seeking meaning (e.g. <i>why do female teens smoke cigarettes?</i>)
O	outcomes	The outcome of interest may relate to the implementation of the intervention (i.e. process) or its effects (e.g. knowledge, behaviour, access to services, morbidity). The cost effectiveness of an intervention may also be of interest.

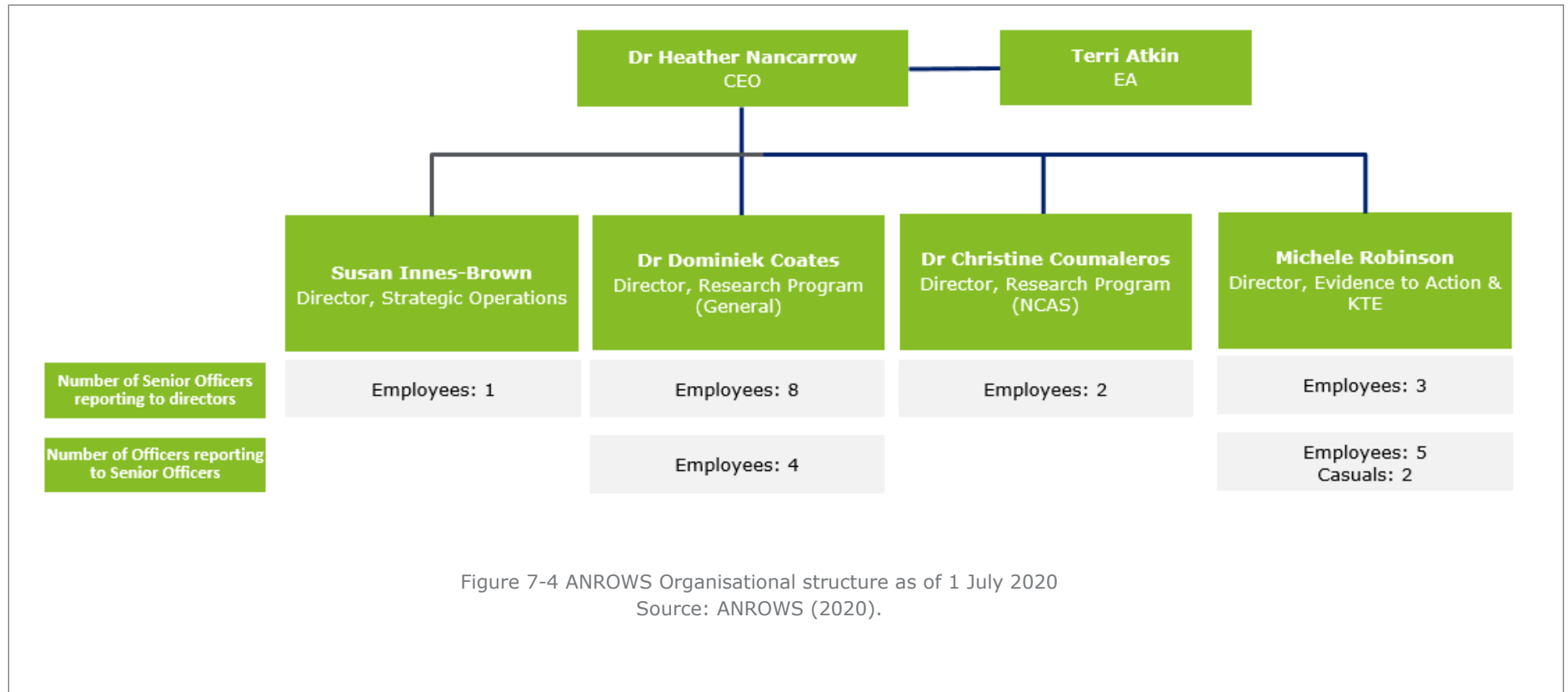
Examples of answerable questions:

- Are social marketing initiatives (I) more effective at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption (O) among school aged children (P) than school-based education programs (C)?
- Do needle and syringe programs (I) reduce the risk of transmission of Hepatitis C (O) among people who inject drugs (P)?
- Can a lifestyle modification program (I) for adults with diabetes risk factors (P) be successfully delivered in a primary healthcare setting (O)?

* PICO may alternatively be expressed as PECO (Population, Exposure, Comparator, Outcomes) or PICOT (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes, Time).

Source: NSW Ministry of Health (2019).

Appendix D: ANROWS current organisational structure



Appendix E: Examples of other research institute organisational structures

ANZSOG

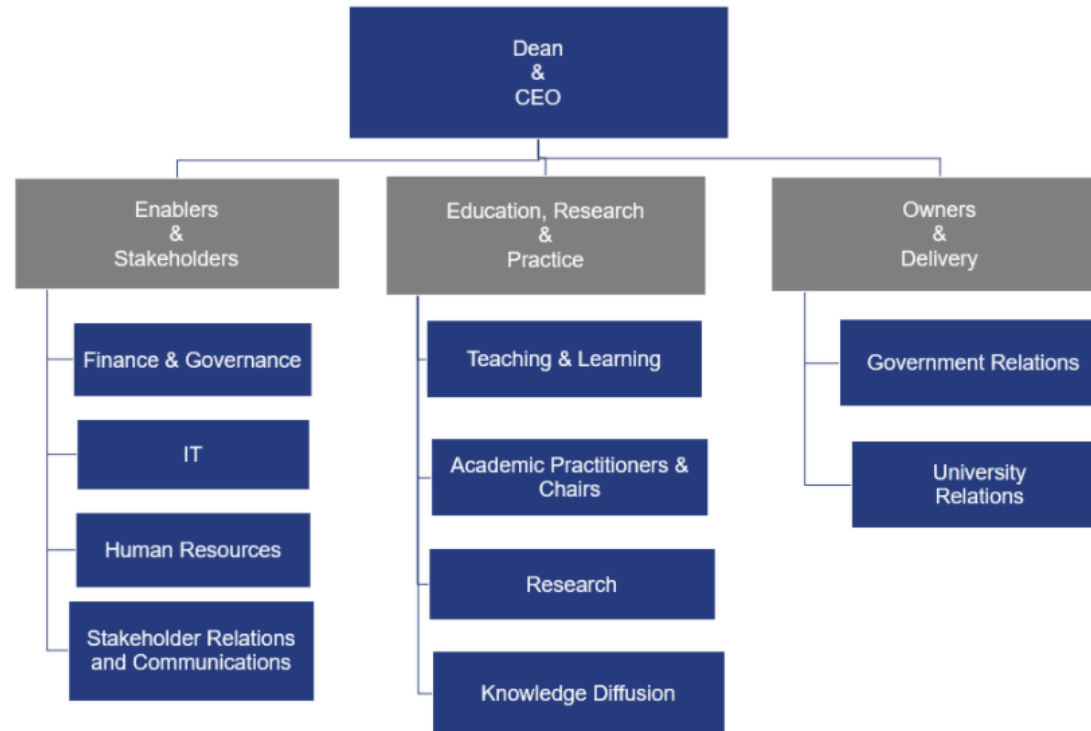
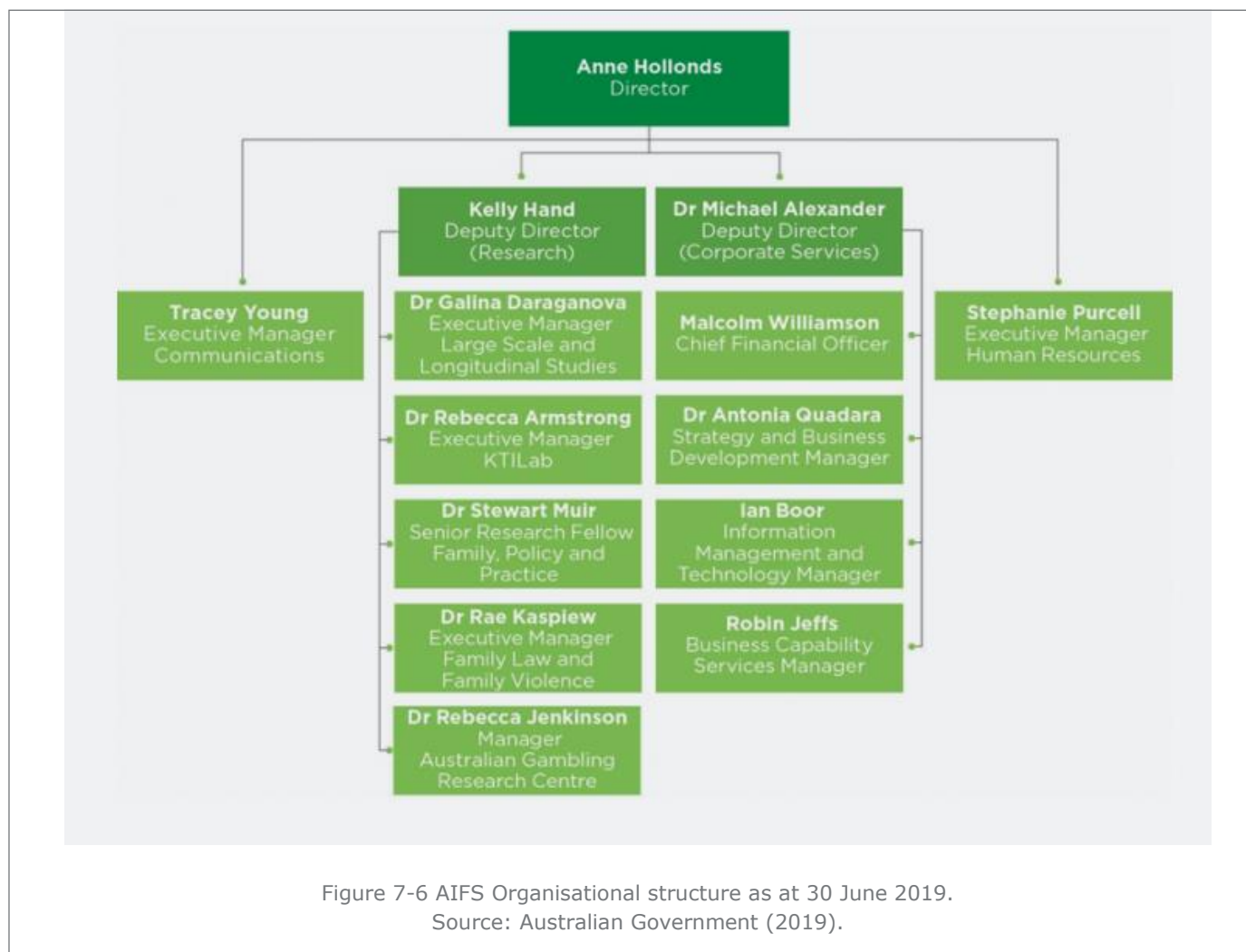


Figure 7-5 ANZSOG Organisational Structure
Source: ANZSOG (2020).

Australian Institute of Family Studies



Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

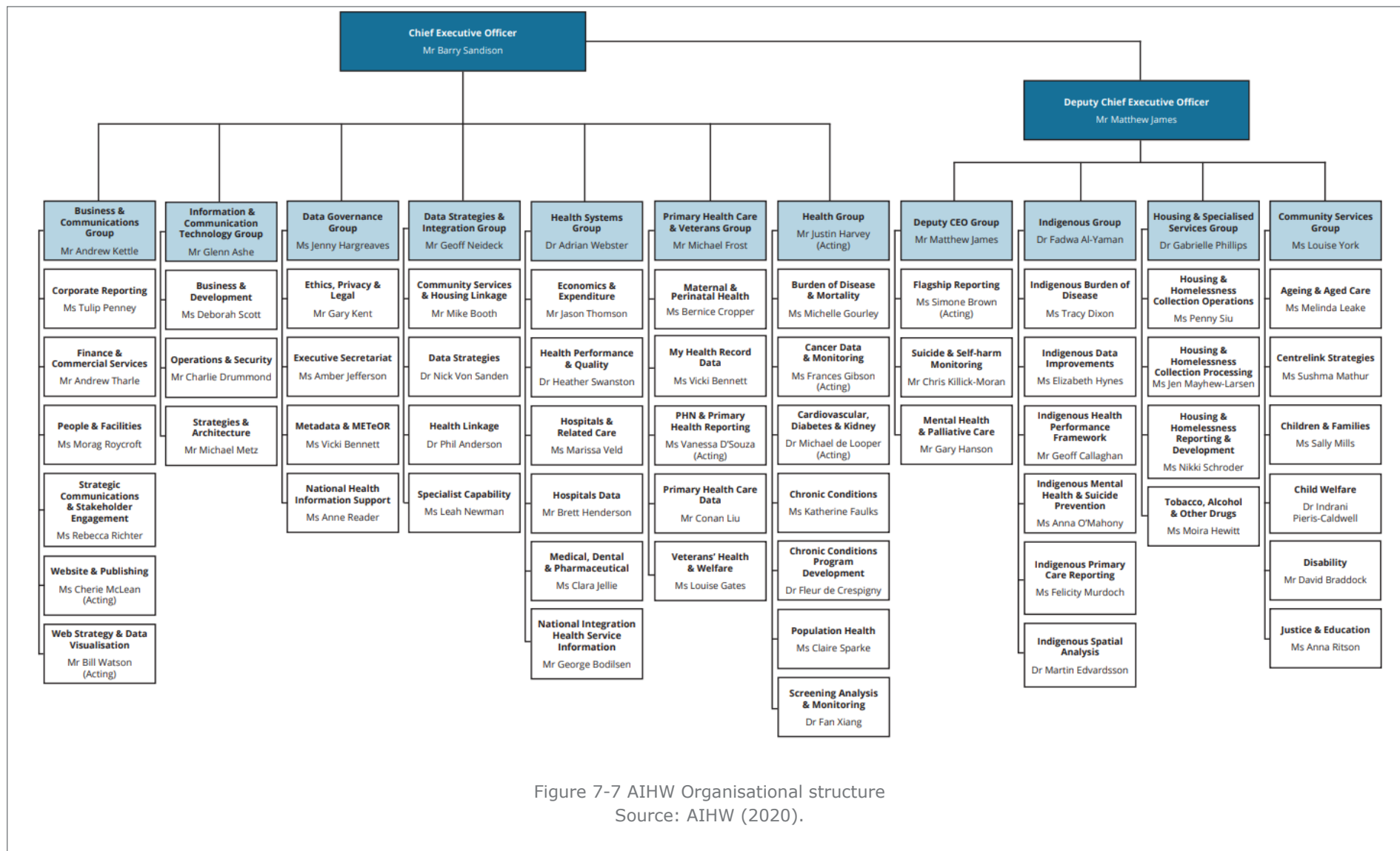


Figure 7-7 AIHW Organisational structure
Source: AIHW (2020).

National Health and Medical Research Council

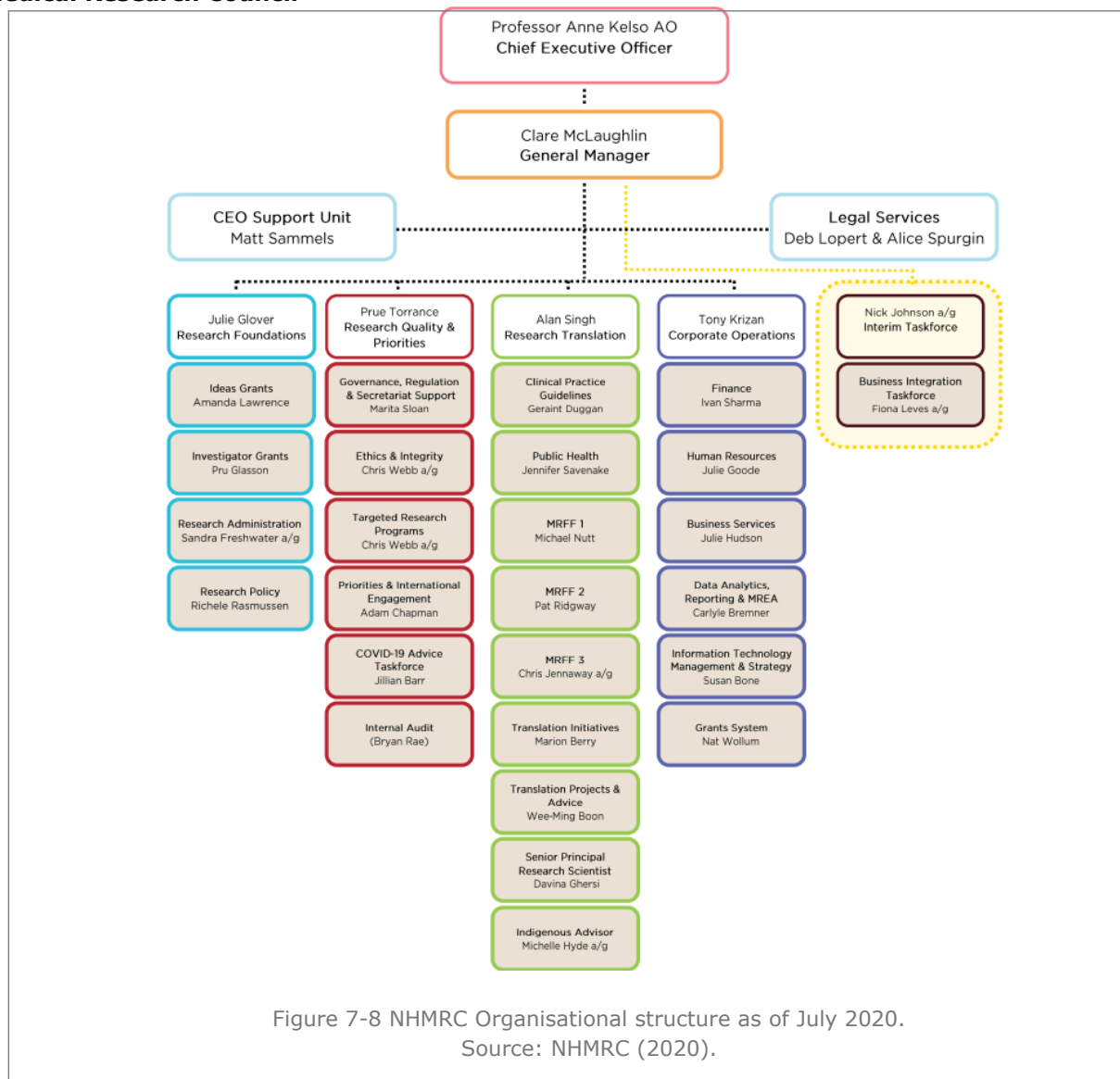


Figure 7-8 NHMRC Organisational structure as of July 2020.
Source: NHMRC (2020).

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