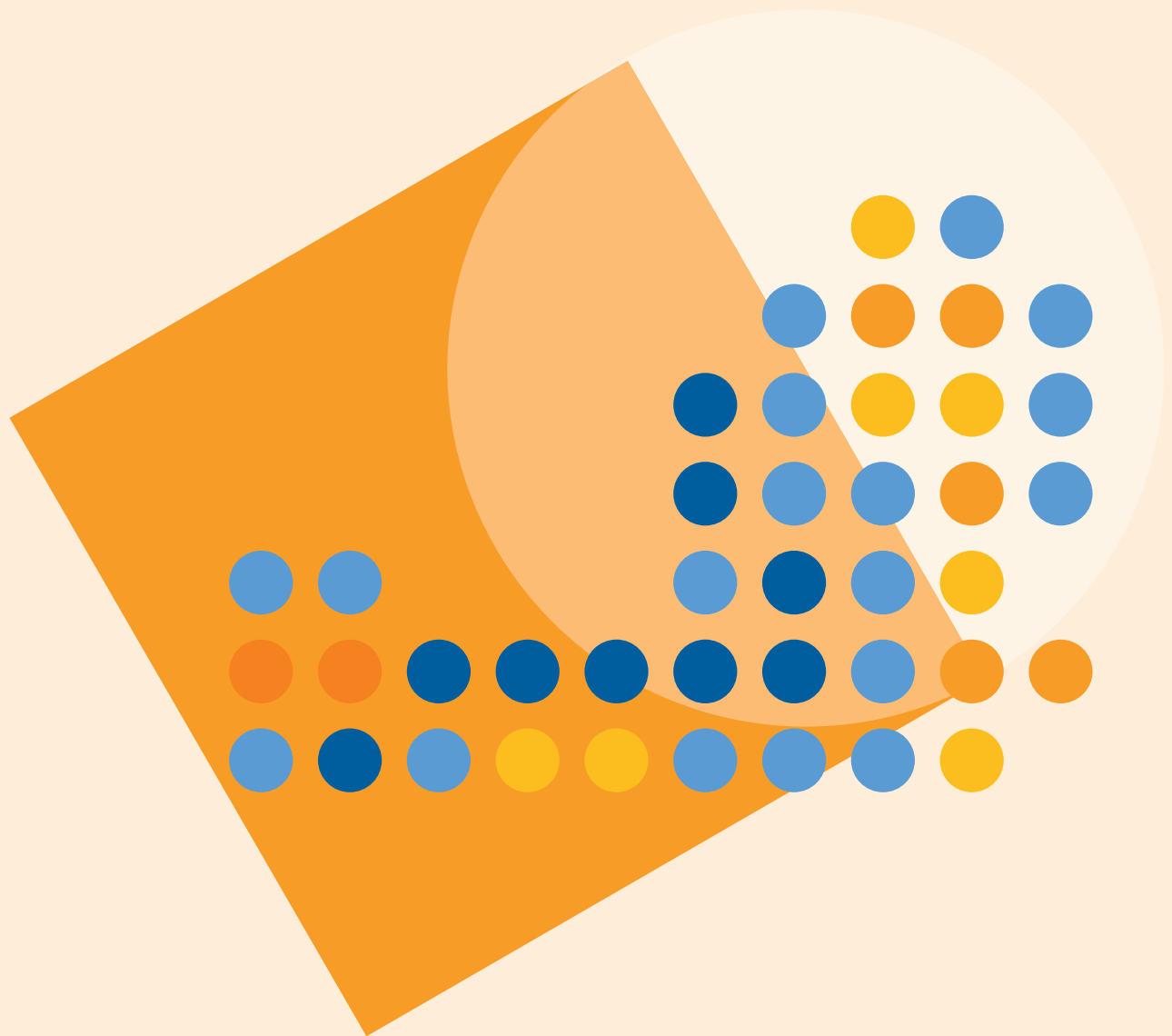


The NSW Man Box 2025

Re-examining what it means to be
a man in Australia

the
men's
project

A Jesuit Social Services initiative



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge the women, allies and feminist organisations who have worked tirelessly for decades to prevent violence and achieve gender equality, and who continue to lead our sector today. This report, and the work of The Men's Project, would not be possible without the progress made by these committed trailblazers.

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Executive summary

Men's violence remains a persistent and preventable public health crisis in Australia with profound impacts particularly on victim-survivors. Understanding the drivers and enablers of men's violence is crucial to developing policy and programs that can contribute to domestic, family and sexual violence prevention, early intervention and response.

The Man Box series contributes to this work, seeking to explore the association between attitudes to masculine stereotypes and a range of behaviours and outcomes, including intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, consumption of violent pornography, poor mental health, gambling and excessive alcohol use. The first national Man Box study was published in Australia in 2018 focused on 18 to 30 year old men. A second and expanded national Man Box was released in 2024 in partnership with Respect Victoria (using data collected in 2023).

The 'Man Box' describes a set of societal expectations that may place pressure on men to behave in specific, traditionally masculine ways. The Man Box consists of 19 rules that represent a socially dominant form of masculinity. These 'rules' include ideas such as 'A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak' and 'In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women'. These rules are organised into seven thematic pillars.

The research outlined in this report is the first Man Box study in Australia to focus on a specific jurisdiction, using the NSW data from the Man Box 2024 study. In addition to examining Man Box attitudes (relating to rigid masculine norms) and outcomes in the NSW sample, and comparing these to national data, this report includes additional analysis related to a second set of attitudes (not included in the national report): endorsement of anti-feminist statements that support violence against women or do not support gender equality. The purpose of this report on NSW data from the Man Box 2024 study is to contribute to building the evidence base for the primary prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence across NSW. The findings should be read alongside the national Man Box 2024 study, which together confirm concerning levels of both violence against women and poor health and social outcomes for men, in NSW and nationally. The findings also demonstrate that the majority of NSW men surveyed do not endorse rigid masculine norms or endorse violence.

It is acknowledged that some of the report findings may be distressing for victim-survivors, LGBTQIA+ people and other members of the NSW community. The data and discussion are intended to generate constructive and solutions-focused discussions on ending men's violence against women and reducing the harms caused to men themselves by rigid masculine norms, for example poor mental health outcomes or problem gambling.

What matters to NSW when reading and interpreting the findings?

Overall consistency between NSW and national responses

The analysis of NSW data from The Man Box 2024 report has confirmed that responses from NSW men follow the general pattern of Australian men surveyed.

Differences between the NSW and national data were generally small.

National comparisons are not a benchmark

The positive or negative variation between NSW and national data should not be the primary focus as the non-probability online survey methodology limits the generalisability of the comparisons between the cohorts. Rather, the primary focus should be on NSW's own results. For example, even if NSW data presents a slightly more promising picture than the national data for certain survey items (such as societal pressure perceived by young men in the NSW sample compared to Australia), this does not necessarily indicate that this data is positive for NSW. Likewise, if NSW data presents a more concerning picture than the national data for certain survey items (such as the perpetration of sexual violence), this should not distract from the prevalence of the other forms of intimate partner violence, which is still unacceptably high. Therefore, in our annotations we have focused on what the data means for NSW, and then we have looked at the difference to the nation as a secondary concern.

Associations are not causal

Throughout the report we refer to associations or relationships between certain behaviours and the proportion of agreement with Man Box rules. These associations focus on the relationship between the two variables. Generally, the stronger adherence to Man Box rules, the greater likelihood there is a problematic behaviour such as the perpetration of violence. While this association is cause for concern, it is important to be clear that relationships are correlated; they are not causal.

The research confirms the distressing levels of intimate partner violence in our community. Almost one-third of NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 reported perpetrating physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV). The findings also highlight the broader associations between masculine norm adherence, antifeminist attitudes, risky behaviours (e.g. gambling and alcohol abuse), poor mental health, and the perpetration of intimate partner violence.

Encouragingly, less rigid masculine norms and lower endorsement of violence-supportive attitudes are associated with dramatically lower perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual harassment.

It is clear that rigid masculine norms and antifeminist beliefs are not just attitudinal issues—they are significant risk factors for violence, poor mental health, and other harmful behaviours. As one part of the work effort related to violence prevention, noting the reasons for men's violence are multi-faceted, the NSW Man Box Report presents a compelling and urgent case for addressing the root causes of violence through a gender-transformative lens.

Key findings

Finding 1:

Consistent with the national study, NSW has a problem when it comes to the perpetration of intimate partner violence, whether physical or sexual.

Almost one third of NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 indicated that they had perpetrated physical or sexual intimate partner violence against a current or former partner.

Perpetration of physical IPV was similar between NSW and national cohorts, with around one quarter of young men indicating they had perpetrated a form of physical intimate partner violence. NSW respondents reported higher levels of perpetration of sexual intimate partner violence, compared to national respondents.

Further, just over a third of NSW men reported they had sexually harassed a woman in the previous month, with about half of these men (18%) saying they had done this frequently.

Finding 2:

In NSW, approximately half of the men surveyed feel societal expectations in relation to the Man Box.

Nearly half of 18 to 30 year old men (48%) feel pressure to act strong even when feeling scared or nervous, while an even greater proportion of 31 to 45 year olds feel this way (55%). Around two in five of all NSW men surveyed feel pressure for men rather than women to be the household breadwinner and a similar proportion perceived societal beliefs that a “real man” would never say no to sex.

Between a quarter to a third of respondents across all ages surveyed feel pressure to use violence to get respect if necessary. While rates were high for both age groups, NSW respondents aged 31 to 45 years generally report greater social pressure to conform to the Man Box rules than the younger age group. However when it comes to using violence to get respect, younger men reported higher social pressure than the 31 to 45 age group.

Finding 3:

While personal endorsement of Man Box rules was generally lower than the perceived societal pressure, a minority of men personally endorsed these rigid social norms.

There was strong personal endorsement related to the need to act strong despite feeling scared or nervous.

NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 years generally showed higher personal endorsement of the Man Box rules compared with the older age group. For instance, more than a quarter (26%) of NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 agreed with the statement that ‘Men should use violence to get respect if necessary’, while 27% of NSW young men agreed that ‘A “real man” would never say no to sex’. For 31 to 45 year olds, the personal endorsement for these Man Box rules was 13% and 21% respectively.

Finding 4:

There is an association between higher rates of Man Box endorsement and higher rates of reported perpetration of intimate partner violence.

Men who most strongly agree with the Man Box rules are more likely to have reported frequently perpetrating sexual harassment (70% of NSW men in quintile 5 - i.e. those who most strongly endorse the Man Box rules). As an aggregate, NSW men in quintile 5, when compared with those who least endorse rigid masculine norms (quintile 1) are:

- seven and a half times more likely to perpetrate at least one form of intimate partner violence.
- ten times more likely to perpetrate sexual violence against an intimate partner.

Finding 5:

Use of violent pornography is widespread amongst NSW men surveyed, especially those who endorse rigid masculine norms.

More than half (55%) of NSW survey respondents aged 18 to 30 used violent pornography in the past six months, and this percentage rose to 83% for those in quintile 5.

Finding 6:

Young men surveyed in NSW have poor mental health, and this is especially so for those who ascribe to the Man Box beliefs.

Around 30% of young men (18 to 30 years) surveyed in NSW reported thoughts of suicide in the previous two weeks, and 27% had thoughts of self-harm.

Nearly three in five (57%) young men adhering most closely to rigid masculine norms (i.e. quintile 5) had thoughts of suicide, more than twice the rate of those in quintile 1. More than a quarter of young men in quintile 5 (27%) experienced suicidal ideation almost daily, 13.5 times the incidence for those in quintile 1.

Finding 7:

There are correlations between rigid adherence to masculine norms and engagement in problem gambling and risky drinking¹.

More than 60% of young men in quintile 5 (those who most strongly endorse the Man Box) were classified as problem gamblers, while only 10% in quintile 1 met the criteria for problem gambling. A similar but less pronounced correlation was evident for risky drinking. NSW men aged 18 to 30 who most strongly endorsed the Man Box rules were more likely to meet the criteria for risky drinking (41%) than men with lower endorsement of the Man Box rules (ranging from 21% to 33%).

Finding 8:

Men surveyed that agree with anti-feminist statements were more likely to endorse rigid masculine norms, a risk factor for intimate partner violence.

This is especially true of men who agree with the statement that 'Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family'.

For men who agreed with the statement that domestic violence is a private matter:

- 35% have forced their partners to do something degrading or humiliating (compared with 13% of NSW men in general).
- 34% have had sexual intercourse with their partner when they were afraid (compared with 12% of NSW men in general).
- 30% had physically forced their partner to have sexual intercourse when they didn't want to (compared with 11% of NSW men in general).

Finding 9:

NSW young men surveyed who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely to have used violent pornography, engaged in risky drinking, and have a gambling problem.

The relationship with these outcomes is most pronounced for men who agree with the statement that 'Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family'.

¹ A risky drinker is someone who is both a binge drinker and/or a high-frequency drinker. A binge drinker refers to men who selected five standard drinks or more in one day, a high-frequency drinker refers to men who selected they consumed alcohol every day, or five to six days a week.



Background

Men's violence against women is a persistent global public health problem (UN Women 1995, Stockl & Sorenson 2024). It denies women their human rights and causes multiple health and social problems, not the least of which is death due to violent incidents. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It includes a key target (5.2) to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (The Global Health Observatory 2024).

While men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of intimate partner violence, men are also important allies in preventing violence against women (Hoxmeier & Casey 2022). There is increasing recognition of the importance of engaging men and boys in preventing men's violence against women (Flood 2019) (The Men's Project & Flood 2024). Supporting healthier masculinities is one of the levers for change. This approach also addresses a number of social and economic problems, including men's health and wellbeing.

This research seeks to understand the adherence to Man Box rules around violence, forms of violence used, as well as any links between adherence to stereotypical masculine norms and/or antifeminist attitudes and the perpetration of intimate partner violence. The study also explores links between such attitudes and beliefs

and a range of behaviours including the use of violent pornography, alcohol and other drugs and problem gambling as well as implications for mental health. These behaviours and health problems underpin and intensify domestic, family and sexual violence. They do not diminish perpetrator accountability or responsibility. Understanding these issues can help in shaping effective practice and policy responses to reduce intimate partner violence and support potential perpetrators to change their behaviour, while also protecting women and children from being victims of intimate partner violence.

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice (NSW DCJ) commissioned The Men's Project at Jesuit Social Services to conduct further analysis of the NSW sample of the 2024 Man Box research, to gain a deeper knowledge of how men and boys in NSW understand their identity, and how this impacts their attitudes, and behavioural, health and mental health outcomes.

About Jesuit Social Services

Jesuit Social Services' vision is to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential. Jesuit Social Services works towards this vision by working with people and communities with complex needs and by designing programs that bring out their strengths and helps them avoid harm to themselves or others, while advocating for broader societal change that provides all individuals a society they can prosper within.

There is increasing acknowledgement of the significant problem of men's violence against women and children. The focus has been, as it should be, on supporting the victims of this violence but we need to do much more.

There is a need to address the root causes of violence and a range of harmful behaviours and we need to intervene earlier, before the point of crisis, by engaging with men and boys.

For over 47 years Jesuit Social Services has been working with men caught up in the justice system who are in trouble and causing trouble. Jesuit Social Services have seen first-hand the impacts of the dangerous and damaging behaviour of some men and the need to effectively intervene early before harm occurs.

Drawing from this experience, Jesuit Social Services established The Men's Project in 2017 to provide leadership and develop new approaches to reducing violence and other harmful behaviours prevalent among boys and men to keep families and communities safe and to improve their wellbeing. The Men's Project:

- i) builds knowledge, skills and confidence among adults who work with men and boys that have opportunities to make our communities safer
- ii) prevents child sexual abuse by seeking to engage with young people and adults at risk of harming others and
- iii) promotes healthy relationships by working with young people who have experienced harms to support them to flourish and build skills to strengthen their connection with themselves and others.

Across each of these areas, The Men's Project seeks to contribute through research and advocacy, program design, delivery and evaluation, and promote help seeking.

Current priorities for The Men's Project include:

- drawing on our Man Box research and child sexual abuse prevalence study, building a greater understanding of perpetration including opportunities for prevention and early intervention
- supporting people who work with men and boys every day (e.g. teachers, sports coaches, social workers) to prevent violence and improve the wellbeing of men and boys
- developing new early intervention approaches with adolescents at-risk of using violence
- strengthening early intervention responses for adults and young people to prevent child sexual abuse
- drawing on our grounded practice experience, advocating for systemic changes that seek to prevent violence and child sexual abuse.

About the Man Box 2024

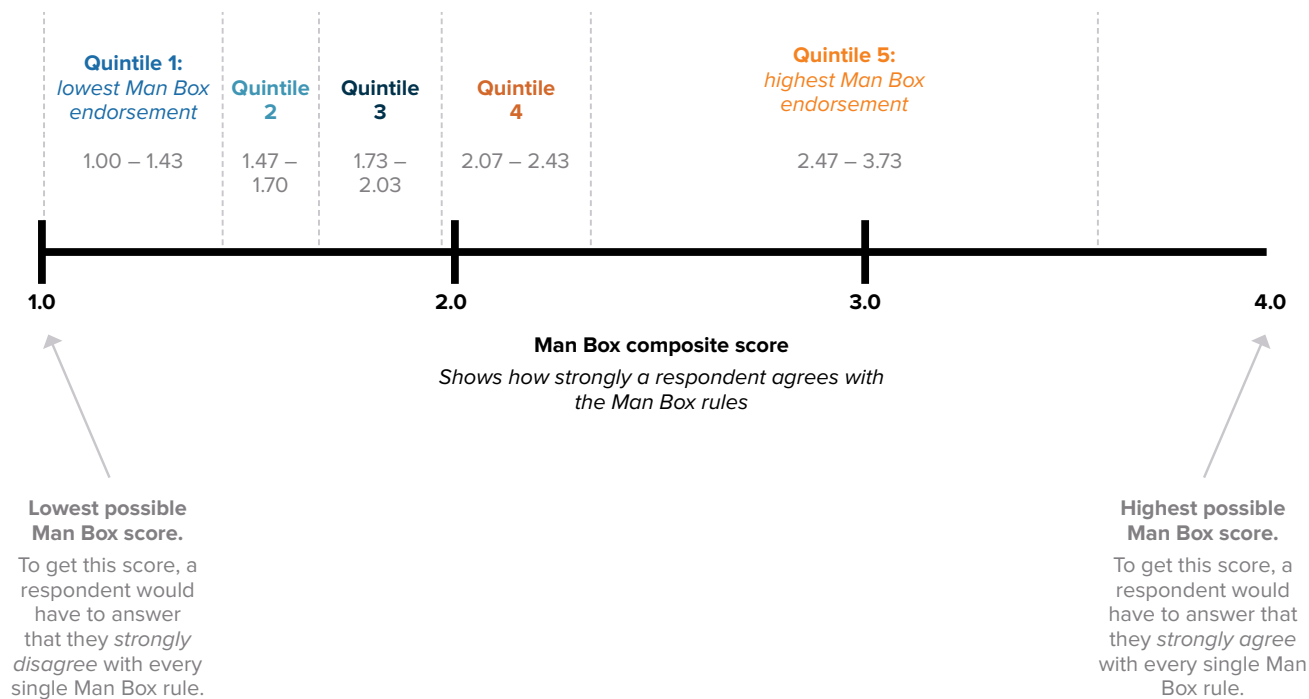
The Man Box 2024 study surveyed over 3,500 Australian men aged 18 to 45 years. In partnership with Respect Victoria, the study used an online survey of a sample of men from across the country. It considered whether Australian men perceive social messages that a “real man” thinks and acts a certain way, whether men personally agree with these messages, and explored whether men’s attitudes predict a range of behaviours and outcomes (The Men’s Project and Flood 2024).

The Man Box attitudes were identified by asking survey respondents about perceived social pressure to conform to rigid masculine norms, and by asking

survey respondents about their personal beliefs about masculine norms. Perceived social pressure reflects the view: ‘society tells me that...’, versus personal endorsement which asks people to reflect on their own views: ‘in my opinion....’.

The study uses ‘quintile analysis’, which splits the whole sample into five groups based upon their scores from those who least strongly endorse Man Box rules to those who most endorse Man Box rules. Quintile 1 (the men who obtained the lowest 20% of Man Box scores) are those who are least adherent to the Man Box. Quintile 5 (the men who obtained the highest 20% of Man Box scores) are those who are most adherent.

Figure 1.10: Man Box quintiles, with range of scores and sample size, NSW survey respondents





About this study

Project aims

The aims of the NSW analysis of the Man Box data are to:

- explore the perpetration of physical and sexual intimate partner violence among the NSW sample.
- explore the relationship between rigid masculine norms and a range of behaviours including the perpetration of intimate partner violence, the use of violent pornography, use of alcohol and other drugs, problem gambling and mental health outcomes.
- explore the relationship between anti-feminist attitudes and a range of behaviours including the perpetration of intimate partner violence, the use of violent pornography, use of alcohol, problem gambling and mental health outcomes.
- explore the association between rigid masculine norms and anti-feminist attitudes.

Research design

This research replicates some aspects of the national Man Box Report, but with a specific focus on NSW data and findings, compared to Australia-wide findings. The NSW data is presented by age cohorts and provides a comparison of the NSW population to the National data. The positive or negative variation between NSW and national data should not be the primary focus. This study is based on a non-probability, opt-in online survey methodology which limits the accuracy and generalisability of the comparisons between the cohorts.

The research also includes exploratory analysis of additional variables and relates to the younger cohort (18 to 30 year olds) only. It draws on data that was collected in the Man Box 2024 study but not included in the 2024 National Man Box Report due to time and capacity constraints. This research examines the additional data as it relates to NSW. Specifically, this part of the research explores:

- Anti-feminist attitudes by Man Box quintile exploring the association between anti-feminist attitudes and adherence to rigid masculine norms.
- The association between anti-feminist attitudes and a range of health and behavioural outcomes such as poor mental health, pornography use and risk-taking activities.

Method for the NSW sample

This report presents the NSW data from The Man Box 2024 report. The total sample size for NSW is 1,274, which represents the highest sample size of all states and territories. This is a robust sample size.

The NSW sample by age group is:

- 18 to 30 years = 950
- 31 to 45 years = 324.

Most of the graphs and tables throughout the report focus on the younger age group of 18 to 30 years because of the greater number of survey respondents are in this age bracket. In the graphs or tables throughout this report, any statistics labelled 'National' refer to the data collected from respondents across all states and territories in Australia, including NSW. Statistics labelled 'NSW' refer to data collected from NSW respondents only. The report seeks to illustrate how data for NSW compares to data for all of Australia.

In addition to showing how the data compares for NSW and all of Australia, analysis was conducted to determine if any differences between NSW data and national data are statistically significant. If the difference is statistically significant, the numbers are bolded. In this 'T-test' analysis process, NSW data was compared to national data that excludes NSW. This process of analysis isolated NSW results compared to the rest of Australia without the influence of NSW in the national data. Statistical significance indicates the likelihood that the observed difference is not due to random chance (random sampling variability). In other words, the bolded numbers point to a real (not random) difference, but the bolded numbers do not necessarily indicate the difference is large or important.

T-test analysis was also conducted to determine if there are statistically significant differences in the data between results for different age groups, and between results for quintiles. Where numbers are bolded, this indicates a statistically significant difference between those groupings.

Limitations

Representativeness of the NSW survey sample

This study is based on a non-probability, opt-in online survey methodology which limits the accuracy and generalisability of findings. Survey respondents were recruited via panel providers, using convenience sampling (a nonprobability strategy) which, as acknowledged in the national Man Box 2024 report, may influence the generalisability of the findings. This means that members of some sub-populations would have been less likely to have been invited than others, as people do not sign up to market research for a range of reasons (for example, they may prefer to keep their opinions private, are not aware of these opportunities, are non-English speakers or they do not view the incentives as good enough).

In order to mitigate these limitations, our partner responsible for recruiting participants (CloudResearch) engaged multiple panel providers and conducted exhaustive sampling of these, to maximise the pool of potential respondents. This ensured a larger and more diverse sample compared to using just one panel provider.

We were not able to divide the population into strata and set quotas for each variable due to difficulties achieving the sample size (the younger target cohort, 18 to 30 year old men is one of the most difficult cohorts to recruit for this type of study). The approach relied on natural fallout for all demographics beyond age and gender. The demographic characteristics of the survey sample are shown in Appendix B.

Accuracy of survey respondents' answers

Recruiting participants for the survey through online panels means that there is a risk that some participants lied in order to be eligible for the study, or answered the questions quickly and without fully engaging with or understanding each question. Several steps were taken to mitigate these risks.

- CloudResearch conducted an initial screening of respondents using a vetting system called “Sentry”. The types of screening conducted by Sentry include bot detection, open-ended quality, attention and honesty verification, Advanced FingerPrinting, ChatGPT blocking, IP duplication, geo-location tracking and autotranslation detection.
- Wallis Social Research, the research agency engaged to complete data collection and initial data analysis, reviewed survey responses to check for respondents who completed the survey quickly, provided the same answer to scale questions, and/or provided all the same responses to other questions.
- Wallis Social Research tested questions prior to administering the survey to ensure questions were sensitively worded, that terminology was understood, and that available responses aligned with responses (this process is known as “cognitive testing”).

The data collected during this study may also be impacted by social desirability bias, where research participants provide answers they believe are socially acceptable/desirable rather than truthfully reflecting their own beliefs or experiences. Some questions in this study may have been perceived by respondents as having “right” or “wrong” answers. For instance most people consider violent behaviour to be negative and therefore many men may think it is unacceptable to admit to having used violence. To mitigate this, the research team sought advice from the research agency, research advisers, and organisations who have conducted similar research, and the following mitigants were used:

- Using an online format. Respondents were anonymous and not receiving any live feedback (e.g. body language) on whether their response was acceptable or not.
- Reassuring respondents that their answers would be private and confidential via the introductory text, and reminders during the survey.
- Framing questions without explicitly naming the topic but instead describing a specific behaviour. For instance, rather than asking respondents how often they viewed ‘violent pornography’, they were asked how often they viewed pornography which included one or more of the following being done to a woman: ‘pushing or shoving; pulling hair; spanking; gagging; choking; slapping; kicking; punching; bondage or restraint; forcing sex.’

This study considers only one representation of stereotypical masculine norms

This study does not consider the full diversity of ways in which men engage with masculinity and with what it means to be a man in Australia. An individual’s experience of social pressures related to masculinity (and whether or not they internalise these messages) are influenced by intersectional factors like race, ethnicity, class, age, gender identity, sexuality and ability. Social messages related to masculinity are also experienced differently in different contexts, and men ‘perform’ masculinity differently depending on the context they are in (for instance, their perception of social expectations around masculinity may be different within their friendship group compared to their workplace). As a result, there is no homogenous expression or experience of masculinity – masculinity is ‘multiple and situational’ (Our Watch, 2019). In this study, the version of masculinity expressed by the ‘Man Box’ is a shorthand for a rigid version of masculinity. It should not be assumed that all men relate to, or experience the pressures of, the Man Box as it is formulated in this study.

This study does not comprehensively consider the role of intersectional factors in explaining the findings

The attitudes, behaviours and life outcomes measured in this study are influenced by a range of factors which interact to shape the specific experiences of men, including their experience of intersecting forms of privilege and oppression. This study seeks to measure the impact of men’s personal beliefs about masculinity at the population level, and does not comprehensively explore the role of individual characteristics such as race, sexuality, religion, or ability in explaining the findings. In other words, it generally does not consider men’s experience of oppression and/or discrimination when discussing the study’s findings.

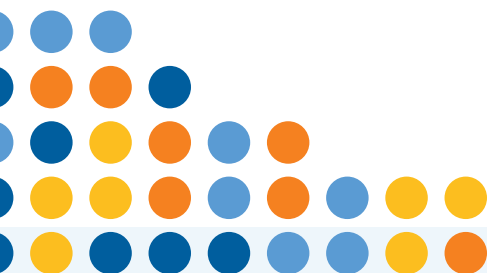


Findings

Overview

The following sections present the findings of the research regarding NSW men that were surveyed. We begin with data on the perpetration of intimate partner violence as it describes the extent and nature of the problem we are trying to address (Section A). We then explore the extent to which NSW men perceive social pressure to adhere to stereotypical masculine norms (Section B), followed by their own personal endorsement of these norms (Section C), reflected in a Man Box score. We consider which Man Box rules ‘stick’ (i.e. where personal endorsement is at similar levels to perceived social pressure), and for which rules men personally adopt less rigid masculine norms (Section D). We examine demographic associations with the higher Man Box scores (Section E).

Sections F-I explore associations between attitudes and behaviours and other outcomes. We examine the relationship between personal endorsement of rigid masculine norms (Man Box score) and perpetration of intimate partner violence (Section F), as well as other outcomes such as poor mental health, pornography use, alcohol and other drugs and gambling problems (Section G). Similarly, we consider the association between anti-feminist attitudes and perpetration of intimate partner violence (Section H) and a range of outcomes (Section I).



Section A: Perpetration of intimate partner violence

The Man Box survey provides data on the perpetration of intimate partner violence from the perspective of people who have used violence, rather than their victim-survivors, and confirms there are unacceptable rates of intimate partner violence in NSW among survey respondents.

We asked respondents to indicate if they had ever done any of a range of physically or sexually violent behaviours to a partner, such as forcing unwanted sexual intercourse or degrading sexual acts, or perpetrating a range of forms of violence. After collecting responses on individual forms of intimate partner violence, we then looked at whether respondents had engaged in any form of sexual violence (by amalgamating these responses) and did the same for

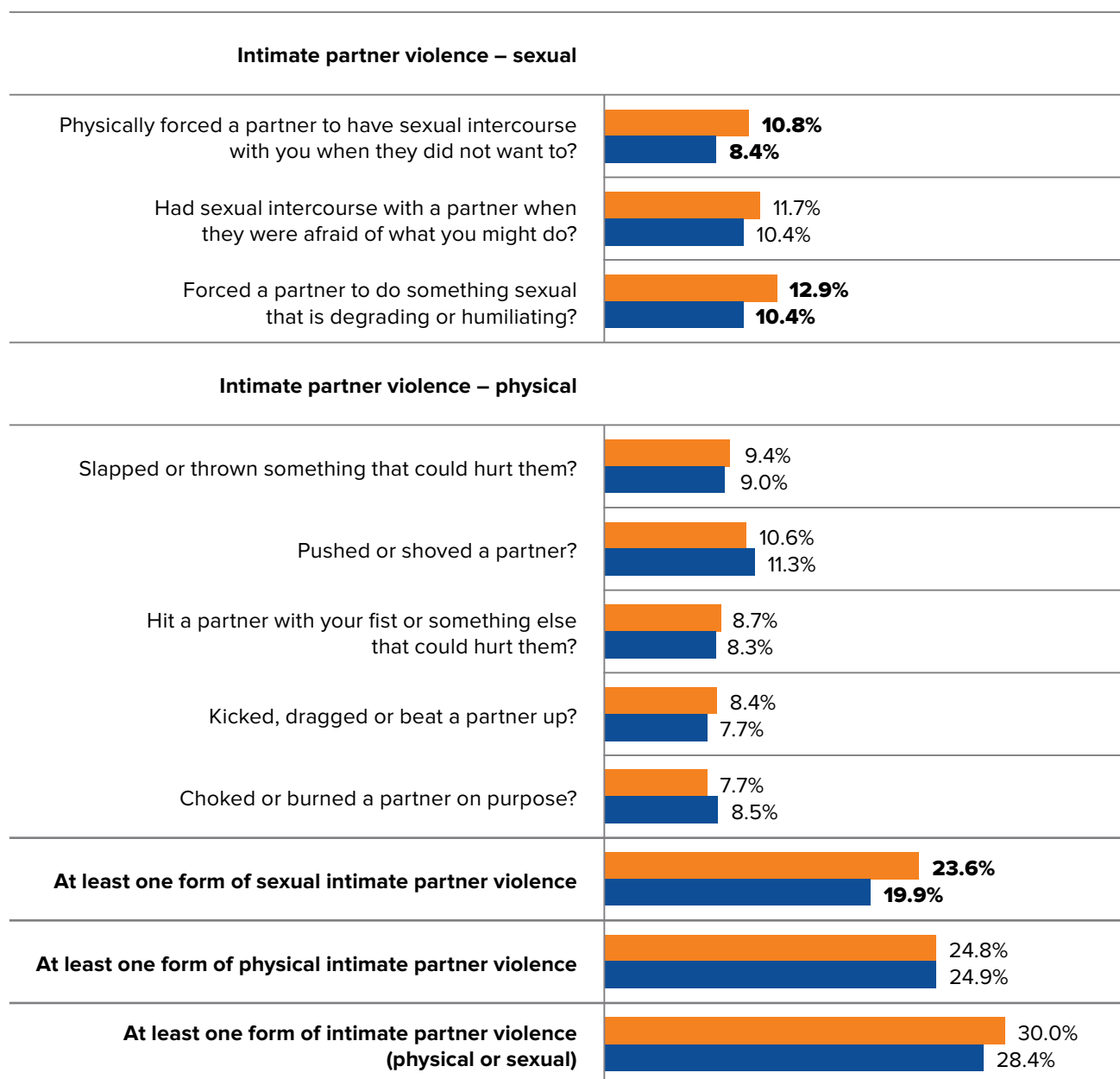
physical violence. (The last three rows in Figure 2.10 show these amalgamated responses).

Almost one third of NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 indicated they had perpetrated at least one form of either physical or sexual intimate partner violence against a current or former partner.

Almost a quarter of respondents indicated that they had perpetrated at least one form of sexual violence against a sexual partner, and a similar proportion of NSW respondents perpetrated at least one form of physical intimate partner violence.

Figure 2.10: Proportion of men who reported perpetrating intimate partner violence, by type of violence, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of survey respondents who selected yes when asked “Have you ever done the following things to your current or any other partner?”



Note: Bold numbers indicate a statistically significant difference

● NSW survey respondents
● National survey respondents

The Man Box also reveals the relationship between adherence to rigid masculine norms and the perpetration of intimate partner violence. In general, the stronger the agreement with Man Box rules, the more concerning the behaviour, while even slightly more progressive views of masculinity are associated with a substantial drop in risky and harmful behaviours. These findings are discussed in more detail in Section F.

In NSW, almost one third (30%) of young men reported that they perpetrated at least one form of either physical or sexual violence against a current or former partner. There is a greater proportion of NSW respondents (23.6%) perpetrating at least one form of sexual intimate partner violence, compared to national respondents (19.9%), and this difference is statistically significant. These findings on perpetration are consistent with the ABS data on victimisation in the Personal Safety Survey.



Section B: Social pressure to conform to the Man Box

The 'Man Box' describes a set of societal expectations that may place pressure on men to behave in specific, traditionally masculine ways. The Man Box consists of 19 rules that represent a socially dominant form of masculinity. These 'rules' include ideas such as 'A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak' and 'In heterosexual relationships, men should

really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women'. These rules are organised into seven thematic pillars (See Figure 3.10). The research examined two key aspects: the social pressure men feel to conform to these Man Box norms, and the extent to which they personally agree with them. This section focuses on the perception of social pressure.

Figure 3.10: Man Box pillars



The Man Box rules where men feel the greatest social pressure were determined by the greatest proportion of respondents who either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the social pressure. The rules where men feel the least social pressure were determined by the least proportion of respondents who either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the social pressure. The research considered the attitudes of the two age groups (18 to 30 year old men and 31 to 45 year old men) separately, and compared the data on each NSW age grouping to the national data.

Social Pressure: 18 to 30 year olds

In the NSW sample, a significant proportion of men aged 18 to 30 feel societal expectations in relation to the Man Box. The pressure was felt most strongly for the rules in the 'Acting Tough' pillar, followed by 'Rigid Gender Roles' and 'Hypersexuality' (see Box 3.10).

For example, almost half of all respondents reported feeling pressure to act tough at all times.

Box 3.10: Man Box rules with the highest and lowest perception of social pressure by NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Highest perceived social pressure	Lowest perceived social pressure
Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside (48% agreed/strongly agreed)	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children (24% agreed/strongly agreed)
Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women (41%)	It's not okay for straight guys to be friends with gay guys (28%)
A real man would never say no to sex (40%)	It's not okay for straight guys to be friends with transgender or gender diverse people (29%)
A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak (38%)	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time (30%)
A transgender man is not a "real man" (37%)	A man shouldn't have to do household chores (31%)

The five rules with the greatest social pressure are the same across both NSW and national respondents, however the order and proportion of agreement changes slightly.

There are some slight variations in the degree to which NSW respondents felt social pressure compared with the national cohort. Figure 3.20 shows that for a few

statements, there is a statistically significant difference between national and NSW respondents – the figures in bold indicate statistical significance. In each case there is lower endorsement in the NSW sample.

Figure 3.20: Perceived social messages about masculinity, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of men who perceive pressure to conform to Man Box rules perceived social messages about masculinity

Man Box pillar	Man Box rule	Agreed / strongly agreed	
		National	NSW
1. Self-sufficiency	A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems shouldn't really get respect.	40%	34%
	Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	34%	34%
2. Acting tough	A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.	44%	38%
	Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	50%	48%
3. Physical attractiveness	It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good.	41%	35%
	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.	33%	32%
	Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin.	37%	34%
4. Rigid gender roles	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children.	28%	24%
	A man shouldn't have to do household chores.	33%	31%
	In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.	42%	41%
5. Homophobia and transphobia	A gay guy is not a "real man".	35%	33%
	A transgender man is not a "real man".	42%	37%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with gay guys.	31%	28%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with trans or gender diverse people.	33%	29%
6. Hypersexuality	A "real man" should have as many sexual partners as he can.	35%	32%
	A "real man" would never say no to sex.	42%	40%
7. Aggression and control	Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.	34%	33%
	In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.	39%	32%
	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.	35%	30%

Note: Bold numbers indicate a statistically significant difference

Social Pressure: 31 to 45 year olds

In NSW, a significant proportion of men aged 31 to 45 feel societal expectations in relation to the Man Box. Again, almost half of all respondents reported feeling pressure to act tough at all times. While there were some differences when comparing NSW respondents to the national dataset, including some rules where NSW respondents indicated greater social pressure, the differences were not statistically significant.

Social Pressure: Comparing the age groups

Interestingly, NSW respondents aged 31 to 45 years generally reported feeling greater social pressure to conform to the Man Box rules than the younger age group (see Figure 3.30, with statistically significant differences highlighted).



Figure 3.30: Perceived social messages about masculinity, NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men compared to 31-45 y.o. men

Percentage of men who perceive pressure to conform to Man Box rules perceived social messages about masculinity

Man Box pillar	Man Box rule	Agreed / strongly agreed	
		18-30	31-45
1. Self-sufficiency	A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems shouldn't really get respect.	34%	37%
	Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	34%	35%
2. Acting tough	A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.	38%	48%
	Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	48%	55%
3. Physical attractiveness	It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good.	35%	39%
	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.	32%	30%
	Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin.	34%	36%
4. Rigid gender roles	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children.	24%	28%
	A man shouldn't have to do household chores.	31%	29%
	In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.	41%	40%
5. Homophobia and transphobia	A gay guy is not a "real man".	33%	35%
	A transgender man is not a "real man".	37%	47%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with gay guys.	28%	29%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with trans or gender diverse people.	29%	31%
6. Hypersexuality	A "real man" should have as many sexual partners as he can.	32%	38%
	A "real man" would never say no to sex.	40%	39%
7. Aggression and control	Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.	33%	24%
	In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.	32%	40%
	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.	30%	35%

Note: Bold numbers indicate a statistically significant difference

However, for the rule 'Men should use violence to get respect if necessary', a higher proportion of the younger age group feel social pressure to conform, compared with the older age group. It seems that this may be a stable perception for young men. A comparison of the 2018 and 2024 Man Box studies, noting these were different groups of men, found that for 18 to 30 year olds, the perception of societal pressure for the rule 'Men should use violence to get respect if necessary', barely changed between 2018 and 2024 (it dropped by only 1%, whereas there were large changes of up to 20% for other rules) (The Men's Project 2024).

There is cause for concern when between a quarter to a third of respondents across all ages surveyed feel pressure to use violence to get respect if necessary.



Section C: Personal endorsement of the Man Box

Having considered whether men perceive social messages that a “real man” thinks and acts a certain way, we then examined whether men personally agree with these messages.

In other words, having established that many men feel social pressure to adhere to stereotypical masculine

norms, we move to consider if these rules influence what men themselves believe about how to be a “real man”.

If men responded that they either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with a statement, we considered this to be high personal endorsement. Rules with the lowest proportion of ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ responses were viewed as having low personal endorsement.

Personal Endorsement: 18 to 30 year olds

Overall, as shown in Box 4.10, a significant minority of NSW young men surveyed aged 18 to 30 personally endorse the Man Box rules. However, personal endorsement was generally lower than the perceived societal pressure for each rule. The personal endorsement was highest for the rules in the ‘Acting Tough’ pillar, followed by ‘Transphobia’ and ‘Rigid Gender Roles’. There was particularly high endorsement of ‘Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside’ (42%) and ‘A transgender man is not a “real man”’ (38%).

Box 4.10: Man Box rules with the highest and lowest personal endorsement by NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Highest personal endorsement	Lowest personal endorsement
Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside (42% agreed/strongly agreed)	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children (17% agreed/strongly agreed)
A transgender man is not a "real man" (38%)	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly (22%)
In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women (33%)	A man shouldn't have to do household chores (22%)
Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin (31%)	It's not okay for straight guys to be friends with transgender or gender diverse people (22%)
It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good (31%)	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time (23%) A real man should have as many sexual partners as he can (23%)

The same five rules with the greatest personal endorsement also received the greatest endorsement from respondents nationally, although the order and proportion of agreement changes slightly.

In Figure 4.10, we compare the personal endorsement of NSW young men compared with the national cohort. For a few statements there is a statistical difference between

the two groups, and these are highlighted for ease of identification. In two of these cases, there is statistically significant higher endorsement in the NSW sample. More than a quarter of NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 agreed with the statement that ‘Men should use violence to get respect if necessary’, while 27% of NSW young men agreed that ‘A “real man” would never say no to sex’.

Figure 4.10: Personal beliefs about about masculinity, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that “In my opinion ...”

Man Box pillar	Man Box rule	Agreed / strongly agreed	
		National	NSW
1. Self-sufficiency	A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems shouldn't really get respect.	23%	24%
	Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	28%	29%
2. Acting tough	A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.	30%	30%
	Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	42%	42%
3. Physical attractiveness	It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good.	35%	31%
	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.	23%	22%
	Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin.	32%	31%
4. Rigid gender roles	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children.	18%	17%
	A man shouldn't have to do household chores.	19%	22%
	In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.	31%	33%
5. Homophobia and transphobia	A gay guy is not a “real man”.	25%	25%
	A transgender man is not a “real man”.	39%	38%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with gay guys.	23%	24%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with trans or gender diverse people.	22%	22%
6. Hypersexuality	A “real man” should have as many sexual partners as he can.	21%	23%
	A “real man” would never say no to sex.	23%	27%
7. Aggression and control	Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.	22%	26%
	In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.	24%	25%
	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.	22%	23%

Note: Bold numbers indicate a statistically significant difference

Personal Endorsement: 31 to 45 year olds

As with the younger group, a significant proportion of men aged 31 to 45 years personally endorse the Man Box rules, and again there was particularly high endorsement of acting tough – including ‘Guys should act strong even when scared or nervous’, and ‘Needing to fight back when being pushed around’ (see Figure 4.20). There was also a high endorsement of the statement ‘A transgender man is not a not a “real man”’, but lower endorsement of other statements related to homophobia.

When we compared the NSW and national findings for this age group, there were a number of statistically significant differences. With one exception, the NSW group of 31 to 45 year old men showed higher personal endorsement in all of these statistically significant cases. For example, an additional 5% of NSW men believed ‘Men should figure out their personal problems on their own’ and ‘In heterosexual relationships a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship’ compared with the national cohort.



Figure 4.20: Personal beliefs about masculinity, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 31-45 y.o. men

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that “In my opinion ...”

Man Box pillar	Man Box rule	Agreed / strongly agreed	
		National	NSW
1. Self-sufficiency	A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems shouldn't really get respect.	19%	24%
	Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	24%	29%
2. Acting tough	A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.	27%	30%
	Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	41%	44%
3. Physical attractiveness	It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good.	34%	28%
	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.	17%	19%
	Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin.	24%	30%
4. Rigid gender roles	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children.	13%	14%
	A man shouldn't have to do household chores.	11%	14%
	In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.	22%	22%
5. Homophobia and transphobia	A gay guy is not a “real man”.	19%	23%
	A transgender man is not a “real man”.	43%	40%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with gay guys.	17%	20%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with trans or gender diverse people.	17%	20%
6. Hypersexuality	A “real man” should have as many sexual partners as he can.	16%	18%
	A “real man” would never say no to sex.	17%	21%
7. Aggression and control	Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.	11%	13%
	In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.	20%	25%
	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.	24%	26%

Personal Endorsement: Comparing the age groups

NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 years generally showed higher personal endorsement of the Man Box rules compared with the older age group. This is the reverse of perceived social pressure discussed in Section B, above.

These differences in personal endorsement are shown in Figure 4.30, with statistically significant differences highlighted.

In the NSW sample, the younger age group are less likely than the older age group to perceive social pressure but are more likely than the older group to personally endorse the Man Box rules. A key finding is that younger men in the NSW sample are twice as likely to believe men should use violence to get respect than older men.



Figure 4.30: Personal beliefs about masculinity, NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men compared to 31-45 y.o. men

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that “In my opinion ...”

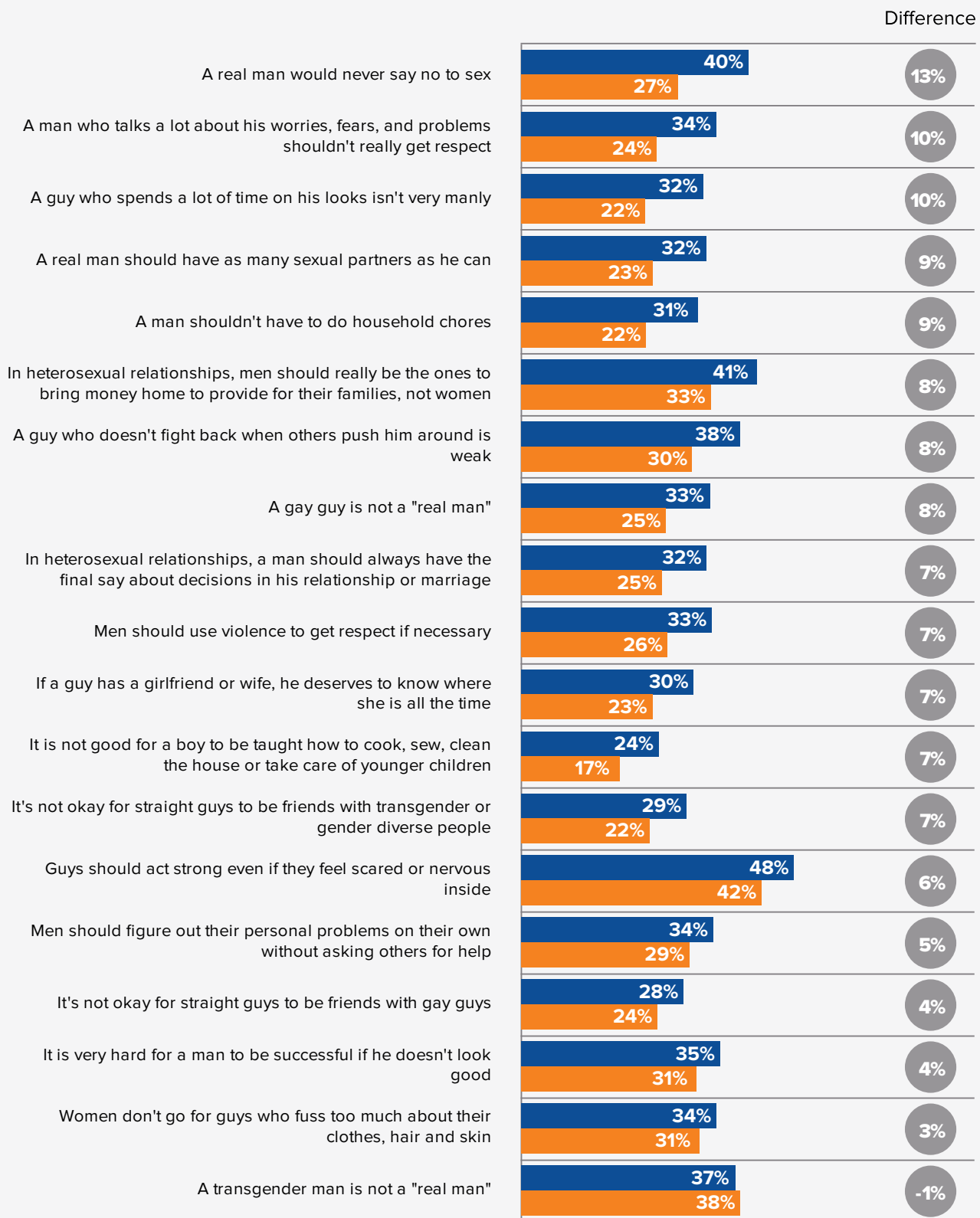
Man Box pillar	Man Box rule	Agreed / strongly agreed	
		18-30	31-45
1. Self-sufficiency	A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems shouldn't really get respect.	24%	24%
	Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	29%	29%
2. Acting tough	A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.	30%	30%
	Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	42%	44%
3. Physical attractiveness	It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good.	31%	28%
	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.	22%	19%
	Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin.	31%	30%
4. Rigid gender roles	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children.	17%	14%
	A man shouldn't have to do household chores.	22%	14%
	In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.	33%	22%
5. Homophobia and transphobia	A gay guy is not a “real man”.	25%	23%
	A transgender man is not a “real man”.	38%	40%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with gay guys.	24%	20%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with trans or gender diverse people.	22%	20%
6. Hypersexuality	A “real man” should have as many sexual partners as he can.	23%	18%
	A “real man” would never say no to sex.	27%	21%
7. Aggression and control	Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.	26%	13%
	In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.	25%	25%
	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.	23%	26%

Section D: The relationship between social pressure and personal endorsement – which Man Box rules stick?

It is clear there is variation between the ideas of manhood often communicated by society, and men's personal beliefs about how a "real man" thinks, feels, and behaves. Figure 5.10 depicts the proportion of young men aged 18 to 30 in the NSW sample who perceive social pressure to conform with each Man Box rule, the proportion of those men who personally agree with each Man Box rule, and the difference between the two. The difference between them provides some insight into which Man Box rules are more likely to be internalised, however, the findings should be read with caution as none of the differences were statistically significant.



Figure 5.10: Difference between perceived social message and personal endorsement, NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men



Note: Dark grey numbers indicate a statistically significant difference

- Social messages (18-30 years)
- Personal Beliefs (18-30 years)

Figure 5.20 shows that in most cases, personal endorsement of Man Box rules is lower than their perception of social pressure. However, there is variation by Man Box rule, and the gaps between social pressure and personal endorsement are generally lower in the NSW sample than at the national level. In one case 'A transgender man is not a "real man"', personal endorsement by NSW young men actually exceeds the perceived social pressure. (Nationally, social pressure was higher in all cases, and a difference of more than 10 percentage points was recorded for 10 of the Man Box rules compared with just one in the NSW sample).

The greatest gap between social pressure and personal endorsement relates to the statement 'A "real man" would never say no to sex', with a 13% difference between the two. Young NSW men's personal views around rigid gender roles are also substantially more progressive than the messages they perceive from society (7-9% difference).

There was a smaller difference between perceived social pressure and personal agreement of Man Box rules that exclude gay and trans men, require men to look good without effort, and disallow help seeking. This may indicate there are some Man Box rules which men uncritically internalise, which could be disrupted with intentional reflection.

The finding in Figure 5.20 compares the two age groups regarding the difference between perceived social pressure and personal endorsement of the Man Box rules. On average, the gap between perceived social messages and personal beliefs was slightly larger for the older age group. The greatest gaps were evidence for the 'Acting Tough', 'Rigid Gender Roles' and 'Hypersexuality pillars', where 31 to 45 year olds showed particular readiness to push back against perceived societal expectations. This finding should be seen in the context of the older cohort reporting a higher level of societal expectations of rigid gender norms than the younger cohort.



Figure 5.20: How much perceived social pressure differs (positively or negatively) from personal endorsement, NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men compared to 31-45 y.o. men

Difference between social message and personal beliefs

Man Box pillar	Man Box rule	Difference	
		18-30	31-45
1. Self-sufficiency	A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems shouldn't really get respect.	+10%	+13%
	Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	+5%	+6%
2. Acting tough	A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.	+8%	+18%
	Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	+6%	+11%
3. Physical attractiveness	It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good.	+4%	+11%
	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.	+10%	+11%
	Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin.	+3%	+6%
4. Rigid gender roles	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children.	+7%	+14%
	A man shouldn't have to do household chores.	+9%	+15%
	In heterosexual relationships, men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.	+8%	+18%
5. Homophobia and transphobia	A gay guy is not a "real man".	+8%	+12%
	A transgender man is not a "real man".	-1%	+7%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with gay guys.	+4%	+9%
	It's not OK for straight guys to be friends with trans or gender diverse people.	+7%	+11%
6. Hypersexuality	A "real man" should have as many sexual partners as he can.	+9%	+20%
	A "real man" would never say no to sex.	+13%	+18%
7. Aggression and control	Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.	+7%	+11%
	In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.	+7%	+15%
	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.	+7%	+9%

Section E: Man Box scores and quintiles

The preceding sections considered social pressure to conform with rigid masculine norms and personal endorsement of those norms. In the following sections, we turn to how men’s personal endorsement of stereotypical masculine norms predicts other attitudes, behaviours, and life outcomes. This includes outcomes such as their wellbeing, risk-taking behaviours, pornography use, help-seeking, bystander behaviour, bullying, sexual harassment, perpetration of intimate partner violence, level of hostility towards women, and denial of gender inequality. The behaviours and life outcomes considered can be broadly understood as “the impact of Man Box endorsement on others” and “the impact of Man Box endorsement on men themselves”.

To measure personal endorsement, we created a Man Box Score for each respondent. These composite scores reflect the level of that endorsement, for each rule, to build an overall score. Full details of the construction of the scores can be found in the national Man Box study². The higher the Man Box score, the higher the personal endorsement of Man Box rules.

Respondents were then divided into five groups (quintiles) based on their Man Box score. Quintile 1 are the men with the lowest 20% of Man Box scores, those who most strongly reject the rules of the Man Box. Quintile 5 is those with the highest 20% of Man Box scores, those who most strongly endorse the Man Box rules.

Box 6.10: Demographic characteristics of Man Box quintiles 1 and 5, NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

The graphic below presents the demographic variables for quintiles with the highest and lowest Man Box endorsement (for 18- to 30-year-olds in NSW). It shows that men with the highest Man Box endorsement (quintile 5) are:

- More likely to be religious
- More likely to be heterosexual
- More likely to be full-time students
- More likely to have no paid job in the last week, and;
- More likely to have been born in Australia.

Survey respondents with lowest agreement with the Man Box (quintile 1)

Have no religion
(52% of quintile vs 45% of total sample)

Are from the LGBTQIA+ community
(18% of quintile vs 7% of total sample)

Have no children
(64% of quintile vs 61% of total sample)

Speak another language other than English at home
(20% of quintile vs 11% of total sample)

Have a disability, health condition or injury
(21% of quintile vs 13% of total sample)

Survey respondents with highest agreement with the Man Box (quintile 5)

Are Christian
(45% of quintile vs 40% of total sample)

Are straight
(96% of quintile vs 93% of total sample)

Are currently enrolled in full-time study
(38% of quintile vs 32% of total sample)

Have no paid job
(26% of quintile vs 24% of total sample)

Are born in Australia
(96% of quintile vs 90% of total sample)

2 THE MEN'S PROJECT & FLOOD, M. 2024. The Man Box 2024: Re-examining what it means to be a man in Australia. Melbourne: Jesuit Social Services.

Section F: The Man Box and intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and behaviours and mental health outcomes

In this section we present findings for the relationship between rigid masculine norms and intimate partner violence, and sexual harassment and a range of behaviours including the use of pornography, alcohol and other drugs and gambling. We also examine the relationship between rigid masculine norms and mental health outcomes.

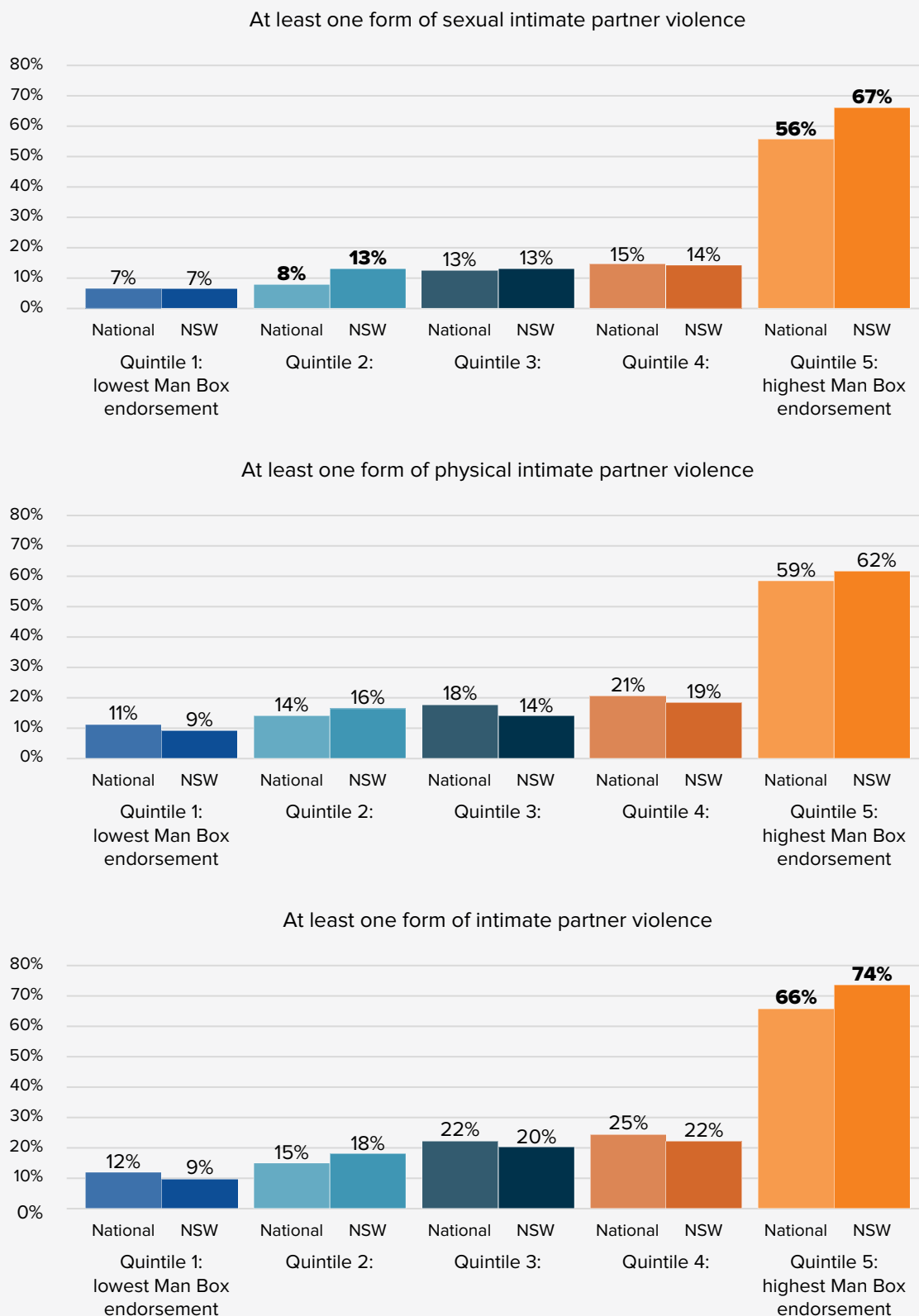
Agreement with the Man Box and the perpetration of physical and sexual intimate partner violence

Figure 7.10 shows the proportion of NSW survey respondents who reported perpetrating at least one form of intimate partner violence, by type of violence and Man Box quintile, compared to national survey respondents. The figures in bold indicate a statistically significant difference between NSW and national data.



Figure 7.10: Proportion of men who reported perpetrating intimate partner violence (aggregated), by type of violence and Man Box quintile, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Aggregated by type of intimate partner violence



When the sample is divided into quintiles based on the degree to which respondents personally endorse Man Box rules and this is compared to the aggregated results for the perpetration of different types of intimate partner violence, there is a strong association between higher rates of Man Box endorsement and higher rates of reported perpetration of intimate partner violence.

NSW young men in quintile 5 are 7.5 times more likely to perpetrate at least one form of intimate partner compared those men in quintile 1.

The picture is even starker when we focus on sexual intimate partner violence. **In the NSW sample, young men in quintile 5 are ten times more likely to perpetrate sexual violence against an intimate partner compared those men in quintile 1.**

There is a considerable increase in the perpetration of any form of intimate partner violence among young men in quintile 5 compared to those men in quintile 4. This suggests that even slightly less rigid adherence to masculine norms are associated with lower rates of the perpetration of intimate partner violence in the NSW sample.

Figure 7.11: Proportion of men who reported perpetrating intimate partner violence, by type of violence and Man Box quintile, NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

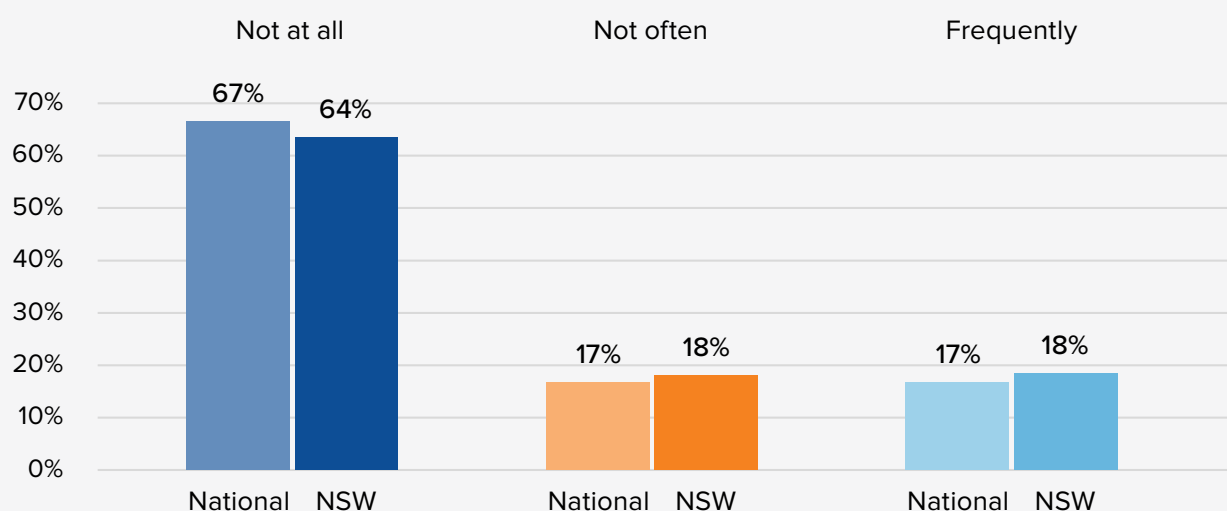
Percentage that responded yes when asked "Have you ever done the following things to your current or any other partner"

	Quintile 1: lowest Man Box endorsement	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5: highest Man Box endorsement
Intimate partner violence – sexual					
Physically forced a partner to have sexual intercourse with you when they did not want to?	5.7%	6.0%	3.8%	5.1%	32.7%
Had sexual intercourse with a partner when they were afraid of what you might do?	2.1%	4.9%	5.2%	6.0%	37.7%
Forced a partner to do something sexual that is degrading or humiliating?	2.8%	7.7%	8.0%	6.9%	36.7%
Intimate partner violence – physical					
Slapped or thrown something that could hurt them?	1.4%	4.9%	6.6%	5.1%	26.6%
Pushed or shoved a partner?	5.0%	6.0%	4.2%	6.9%	29.6%
Hit a partner with your fist or something else that could hurt them?	0.7%	5.5%	4.2%	6.5%	24.6%
Kicked, dragged or beat a partner up?	4.3%	4.4%	3.3%	6.0%	23.1%
Choked or burned a partner on purpose	5.7%	8.2%	5.7%	1.9%	17.1%
At least one form of sexual intimate partner violence	6.4%	13.2%	13.2%	14.4%	66.3%
At least one form of physical intimate partner violence	9.2%	16.5%	14.2%	18.5%	61.8%
At least one form of intimate partner violence (physical or sexual)	9.9%	18.1%	20.3%	22.2%	73.9%

The perpetration of sexual harassment and agreement with the Man Box

Figure 7.20 shows the results of NSW men surveyed who reported perpetrating sexual harassment in the previous month, compared to national survey respondents.

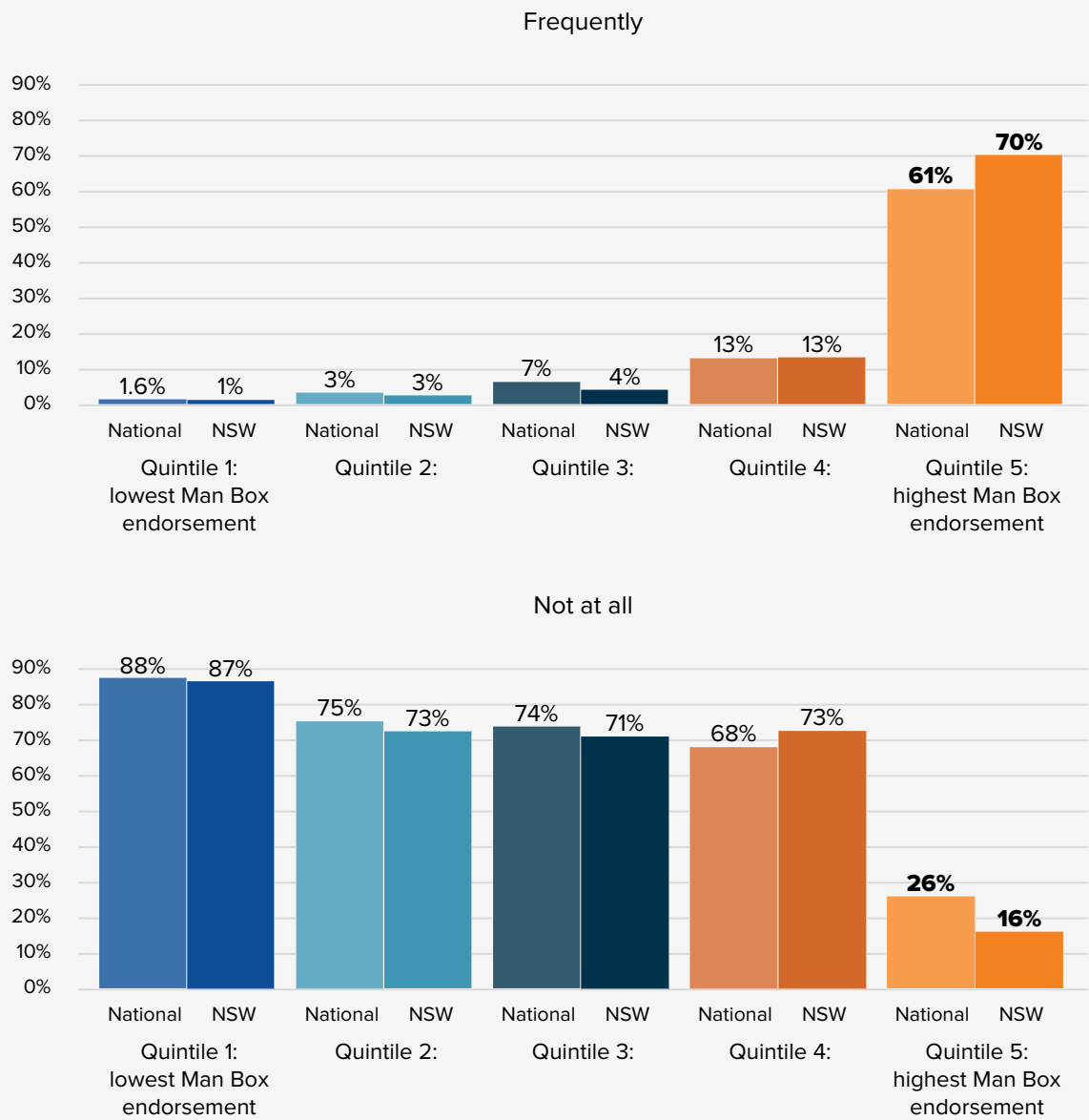
Figure 7.20: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents who reported perpetrating sexual harassment in the previous month, 18-30 y.o. men



Just over a third of NSW men reported they had sexually harassed a woman in the previous month, with about half of these men saying they had done this frequently. These results are fairly consistent with national respondents.

Figure 7.21 shows the distribution of the men surveyed who reported perpetrating sexual harassment by Man Box quintile and compares NSW survey respondents to national survey respondents. The numbers in bold indicate statistically significant differences.

Figure 7.21: Proportion of men who reported perpetrating sexual harassment in the previous month by Man Box quintile, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men



Men who most strongly agree with the Man Box rules are more likely to have reported frequently perpetrating sexual harassment (70% of NSW men in quintile 5) compared to men who have the lowest agreement with the Man Box (1% of NSW men in quintile 1).

There is a strong positive association between higher rates of Man Box endorsement and higher rates of reported perpetration of intimate partner violence and higher rates of sexual harassment.

As an aggregate, NSW men in quintile 5 (who most endorse the Man Box beliefs), when compared with

those who least endorse rigid masculine norms (quintile 1) are:

- 7.5 times more likely to perpetrate at least one form of intimate partner violence.
- ten times more likely to perpetrate sexual violence against an intimate partner.

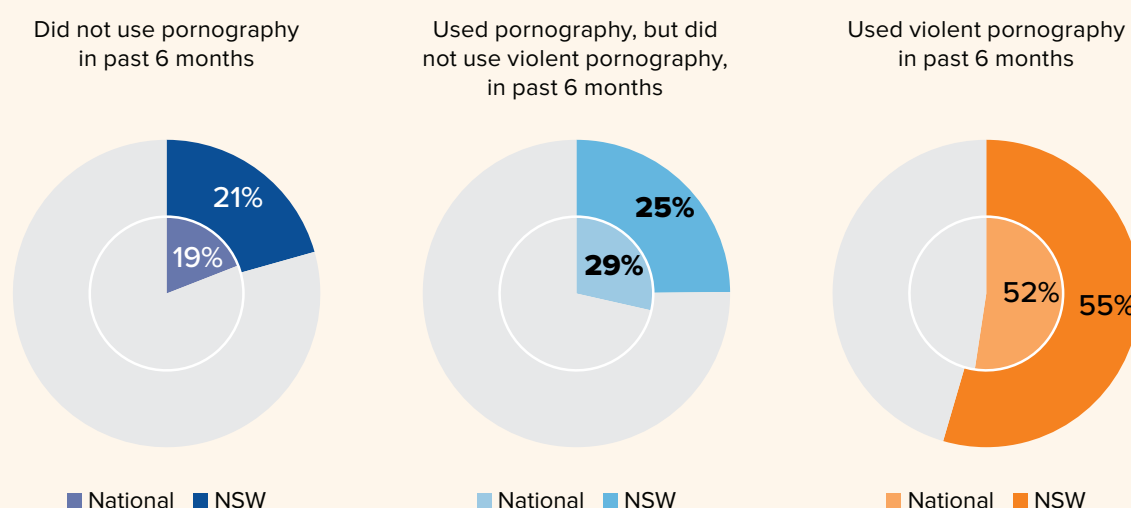
There is a considerable increase in the perpetration of any form of intimate partner violence among men in quintile 5 compared to those men in quintile 4. This suggests that even slightly less rigid masculine norms are associated with lower rates of the perpetration of intimate partner violence in NSW.

Use of pornography

Participants were asked how often they viewed pornography in the previous six months. The types of pornography included general pornography and violent pornography. Violent pornography is defined as including one or more of the following being done to a woman: 'pushing or shoving; pulling hair; spanking; gagging; choking; slapping; kicking; punching; bondage or restraint; forcing sex'. Figure 7.30 shows the proportion of NSW survey respondents aged 18 to 30 years who viewed pornography in the previous six months, by pornography type, and compared the NSW survey respondents to the national survey respondents.

Figure 7.30: Proportion of men who reported viewing pornography in the previous six months by pornography type, NSW survey respondents compared to national respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who selected each option

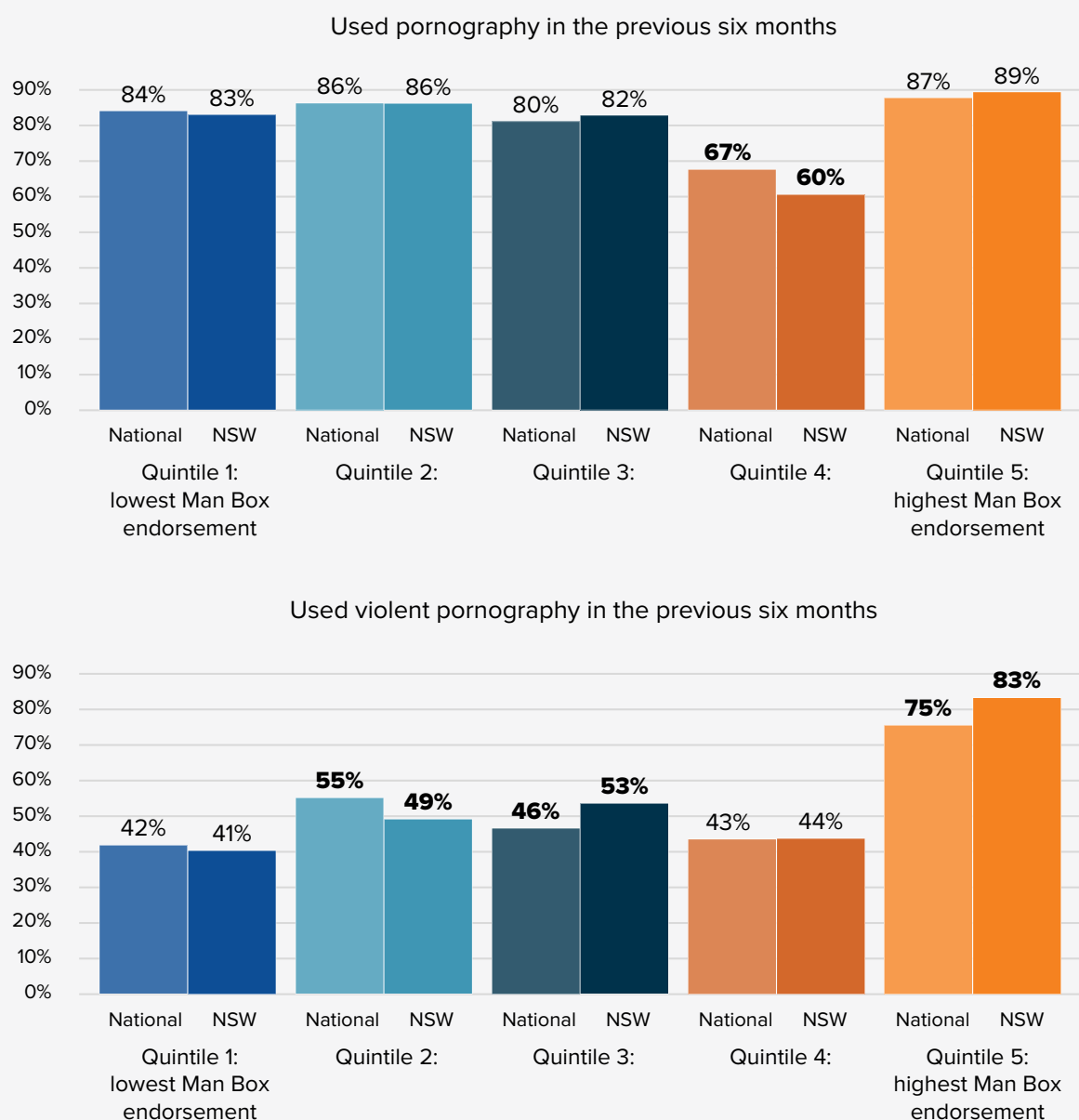


More than half of NSW survey respondents aged 18 to 30 viewed violent pornography in the past six months. Approximately one quarter of respondents had viewed pornography, but not violent pornography, and around one in every five men reported that they had not viewed any pornography or sexually explicit material. This suggests that approximately 80% of NSW survey respondents had viewed a form of pornography in the previous six months. The results are consistent across both NSW and national respondents.

When viewed by Man Box quintile (Figure 7.31) we can see that a higher proportion of men in the NSW sample who most strongly agree with Man Box rules (quintile 5) used violent pornography in the previous six months compared to those men in NSW who least strongly agree with Man Box rules (quintile 1). Most NSW men in quintile 5 (83%) have consumed violent pornography in the previous six months.

Figure 7.31: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national respondents who reported viewing pornography or violent pornography in the previous six months, by Man Box quintile, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who selected any option other than Never



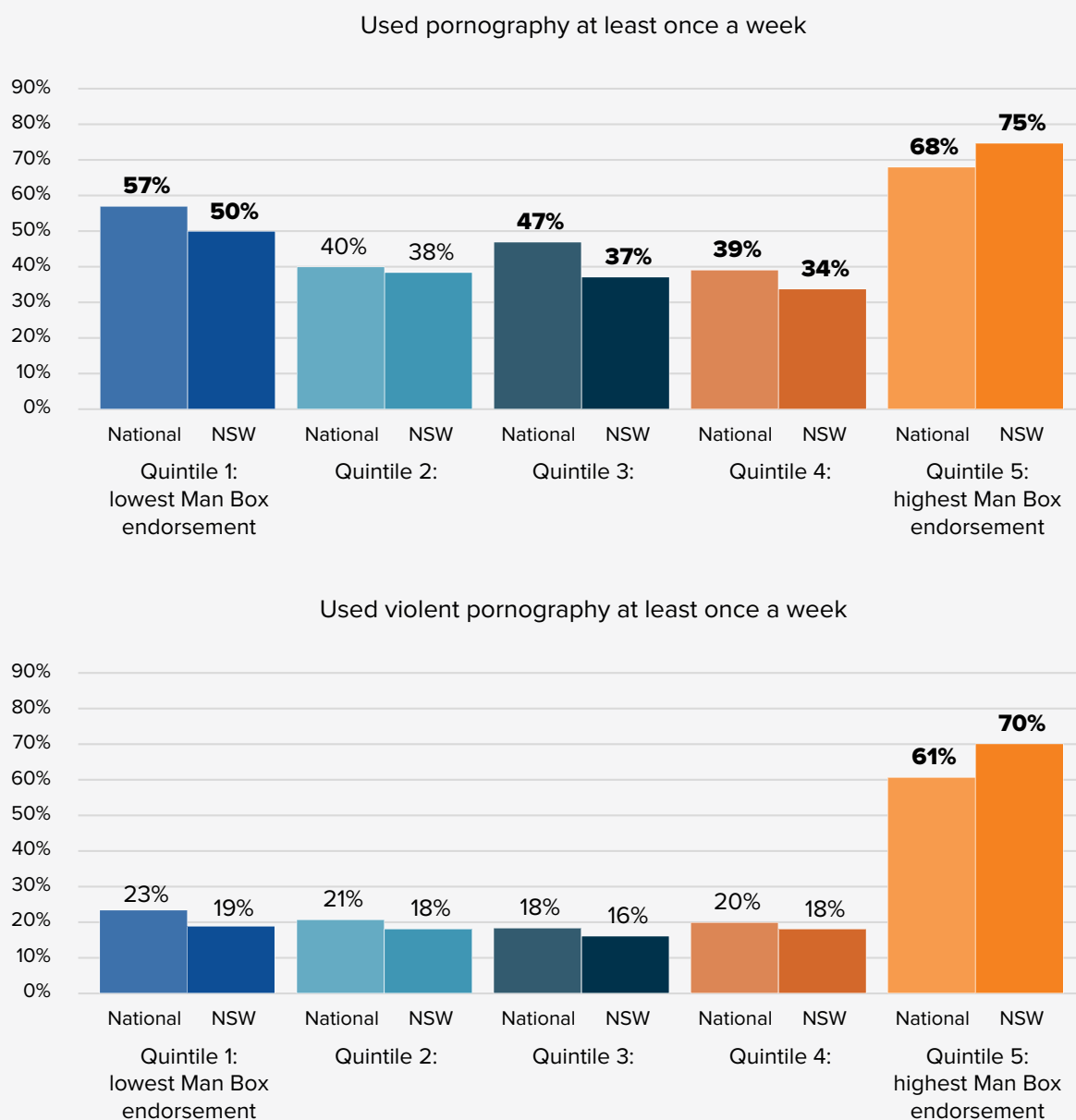
There is not a clear relationship between the personal endorsement with Man Box rules and the general consumption of pornography. However, it appears that men who most strongly agree with Man Box rules are more frequent users of pornography, violent and otherwise (see Figure 7.32).

Patterns of consumption of violent pornography for quintiles 1 to 4 are relatively constant (with between

16-18% indicating frequent use), but for men in quintile 5 there is a marked increase, with 70% having used such pornography in the previous week. Men in quintile 5 are also more frequent users of non-violent pornography than the other quintiles, with 75% reporting use at least once a week.

Figure 7.32: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents who reported viewing pornography or violent pornography in the last week, by Man Box quintile, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who selected Daily, 2-3 times a week, and Once a week



Further, NSW young men in quintile 5 are more likely to be frequent users of both violent and non-violent pornography than the same cohort nationally.

The Man Box research highlights that pornography use is widespread among young men in NSW, with only one fifth of all respondents reporting no pornography consumption and over half reporting consumption of violent pornography. Those who personally endorse rigid masculine norms are more likely to view violent pornography (83% in quintile 5) and are also more likely to have viewed violent pornography at least once a week (70% of men in quintile 5), compared to those who adhere less closely to the Man Box rules. Men in quintiles 1 to 4 were relatively constant with between 16-18% indicating recent use of violent pornography.

Themes evident in mainstream pornography are depicting increasingly violent behaviour perpetrated by men towards women and include acts such as spanking, gagging, choking, slapping and verbal abuse. In addition, pornography demonstrates non-consensual behaviour.

Thirty-five per cent of scenes in popular pornography contain non-consensual behaviour (Office of Film and Literature Classification 2019).

There are concerns that people are accessing pornography at a younger age. The average age at which participants first view pornography is 13.6 years. Of those young men who have seen pornography, 53% watch pornography at least once a week (Our Watch 2024). Access to violent pornography at a young age is occurring alongside an increase in harmful sexual behaviours among children.

In response to growing community concern about the exposure of children to violent and extreme pornography, the NSW government established, in August 2024, an Inquiry into the impacts of harmful pornography, including pornography that is violent and misogynistic, on mental, emotional and physical health (Parliament of New South Wales 2024).

Gambling

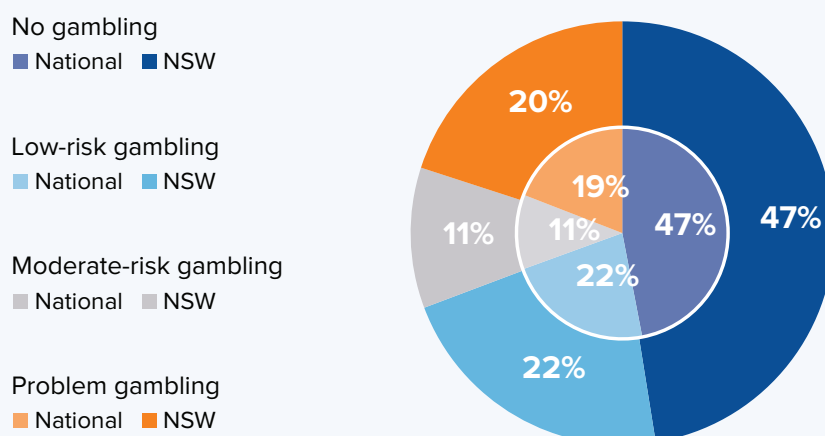
The 2024 Man Box study examined the relationship between rigid masculine norms and the use of problem gambling. An adaptation of the short-form Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) was used to measure the prevalence of problem gambling.

Survey respondents were asked how often in the previous 12 months they had:

- bet more than they could really afford to lose
- been criticised for their betting or
- told they had a gambling problem
- felt guilty about the way they gamble or what happens when they gamble.

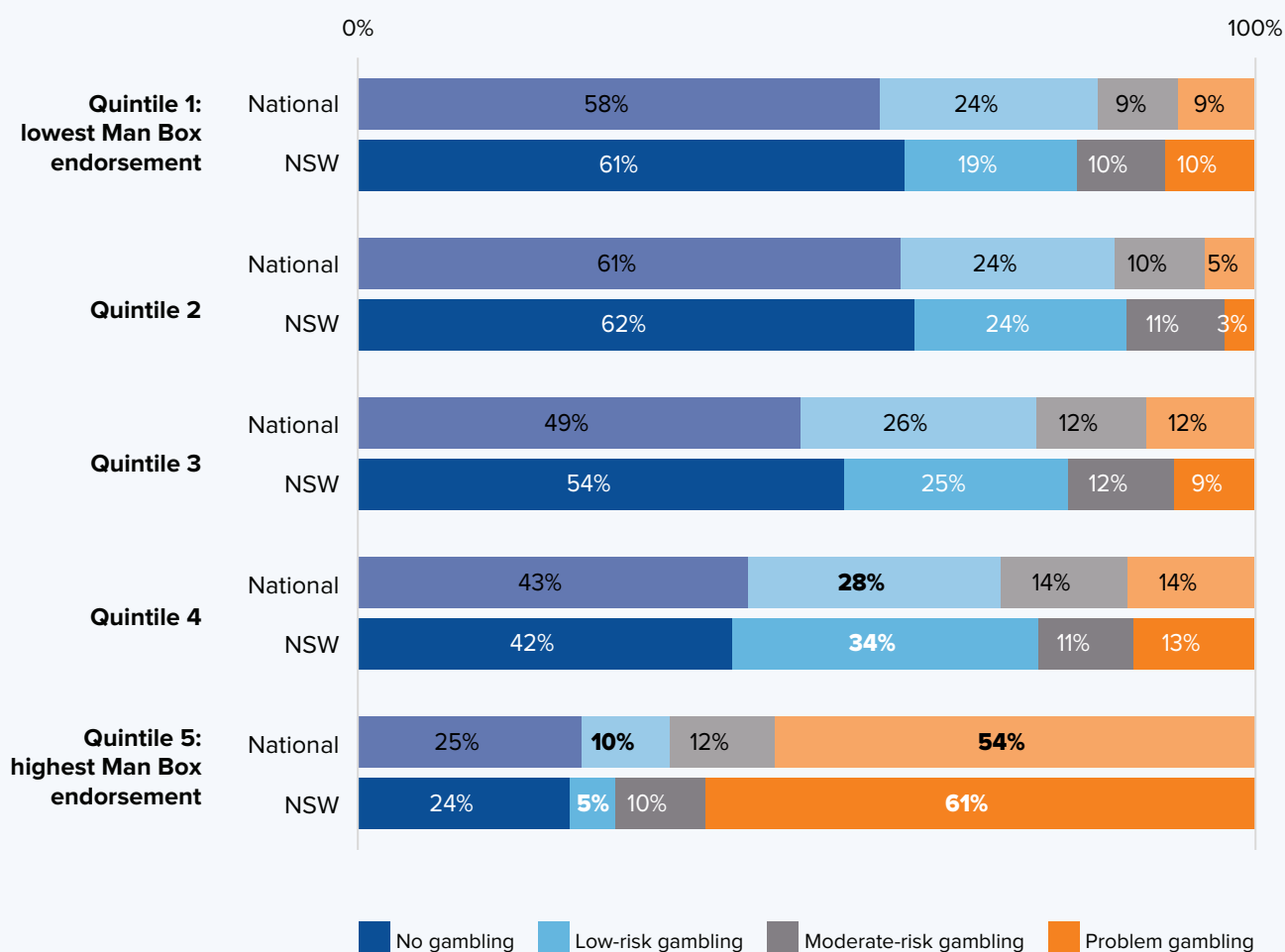
In NSW 20% of the survey respondents aged 18 to 30 met the criteria for problem gambling. This was similar to national prevalence (19%).

Figure 7.40: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents who meet the criteria for problem gambling, 18-30 y.o. men



These problem gamblers showed a strong correlation with belief in rigid masculine norms. **As shown in Figure 7.41, more than 60% of NSW respondents in quintile 5 (those who most strongly endorse the Man Box) were classified as problem gamblers, while only 10% in quintile 1 met the criteria for problem gambling.** The NSW and national respondents are fairly consistent.

Figure 7.41: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents who meet the criteria for problem gambling, by Man Box quintile, 18-30 y.o. men



Mental health outcomes

Mental health outcomes were assessed by asking respondents if in the two weeks prior to completing the survey if they had experienced any of the following thoughts or feelings:

- ‘Little interest or pleasure in doing things’
- ‘Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless’
- ‘Having thoughts of suicide’
- ‘Having thoughts of self harm’.

As with the national Man Box findings, responses paint a distressing picture of the mental health of young men, especially when it comes to thoughts of self-harm and suicide. Around 30% of men in the NSW sample (both age groups aggregated) reported thoughts of suicide in the previous two weeks. A further 27% had thoughts of self-harm.

The data suggests there is a clear correlation between personal endorsement of rigid masculine norms and suicidal ideation and/or thoughts of self harm.

Figure 7.50 shows the proportion of NSW survey respondents aged 18 to 30 years who reported experiencing symptoms of poor mental health by Man Box quintile, while Figure 7.51 examines whether these symptoms were experienced almost daily. Nearly three in five young men in quintile 5 of the Man Box reported thoughts of self-harm (58%) in the preceding two weeks, around three times the rate of those in quintile 1, while 57% had thoughts of suicide, more than twice the rate of those in quintile 1.

The connection is even clearer when focused on those having such thoughts nearly every day. **More than a quarter of young men in quintile 5 (27%) experienced suicidal ideation almost daily, 13.5 times the incidence for those in quintile 1. Similarly, 22% of those in quintile 5 reported near-daily thoughts of self harm, 11 times the rate of those in quintile 1.**

Figure 7.50: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national respondents who reported experiencing symptoms of poor mental health by Man Box quintile, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who experienced the symptom in the two weeks prior to the survey

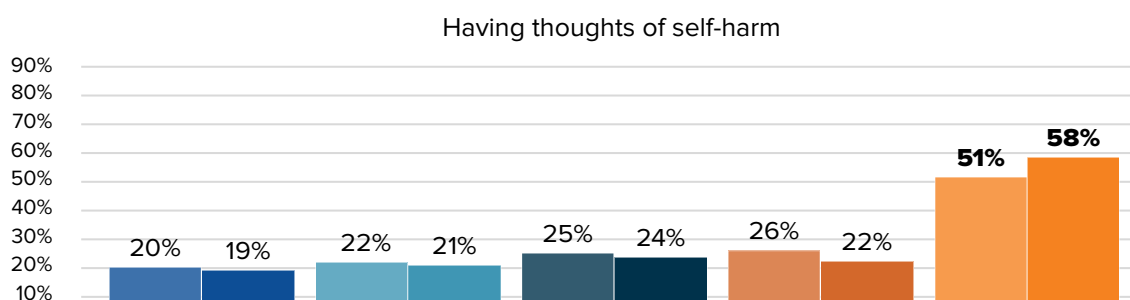
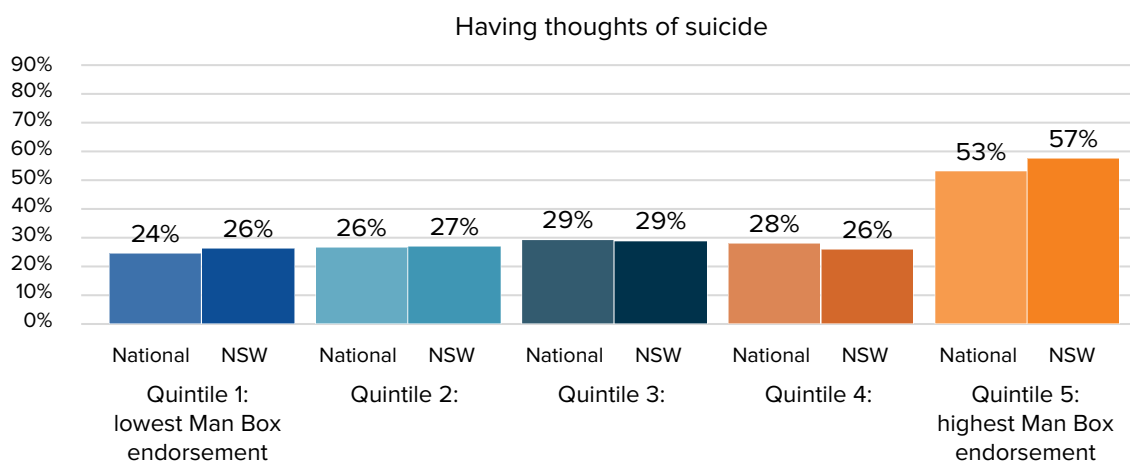
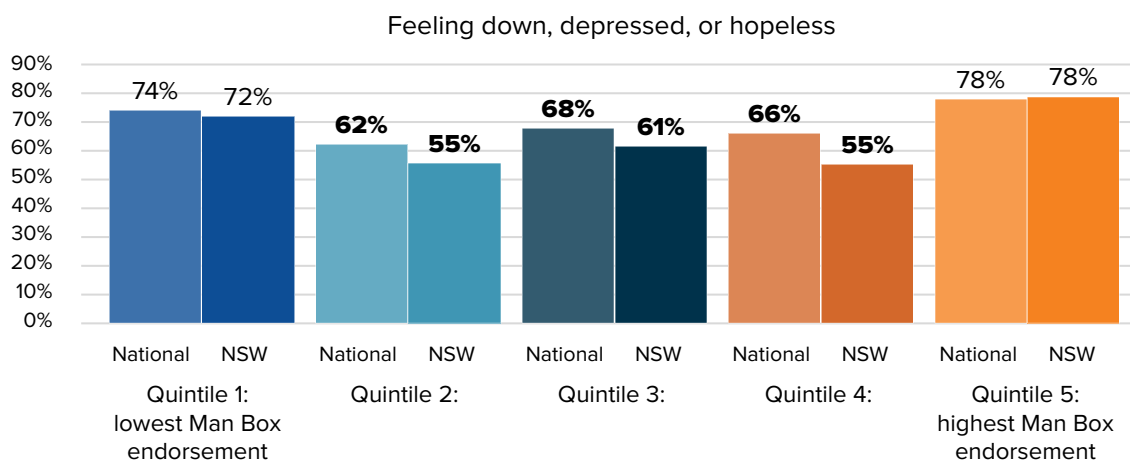
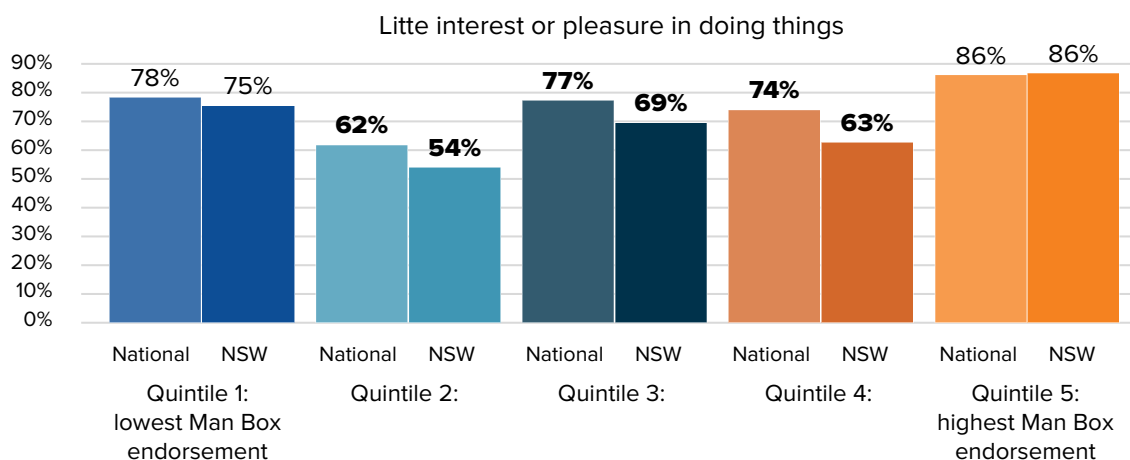
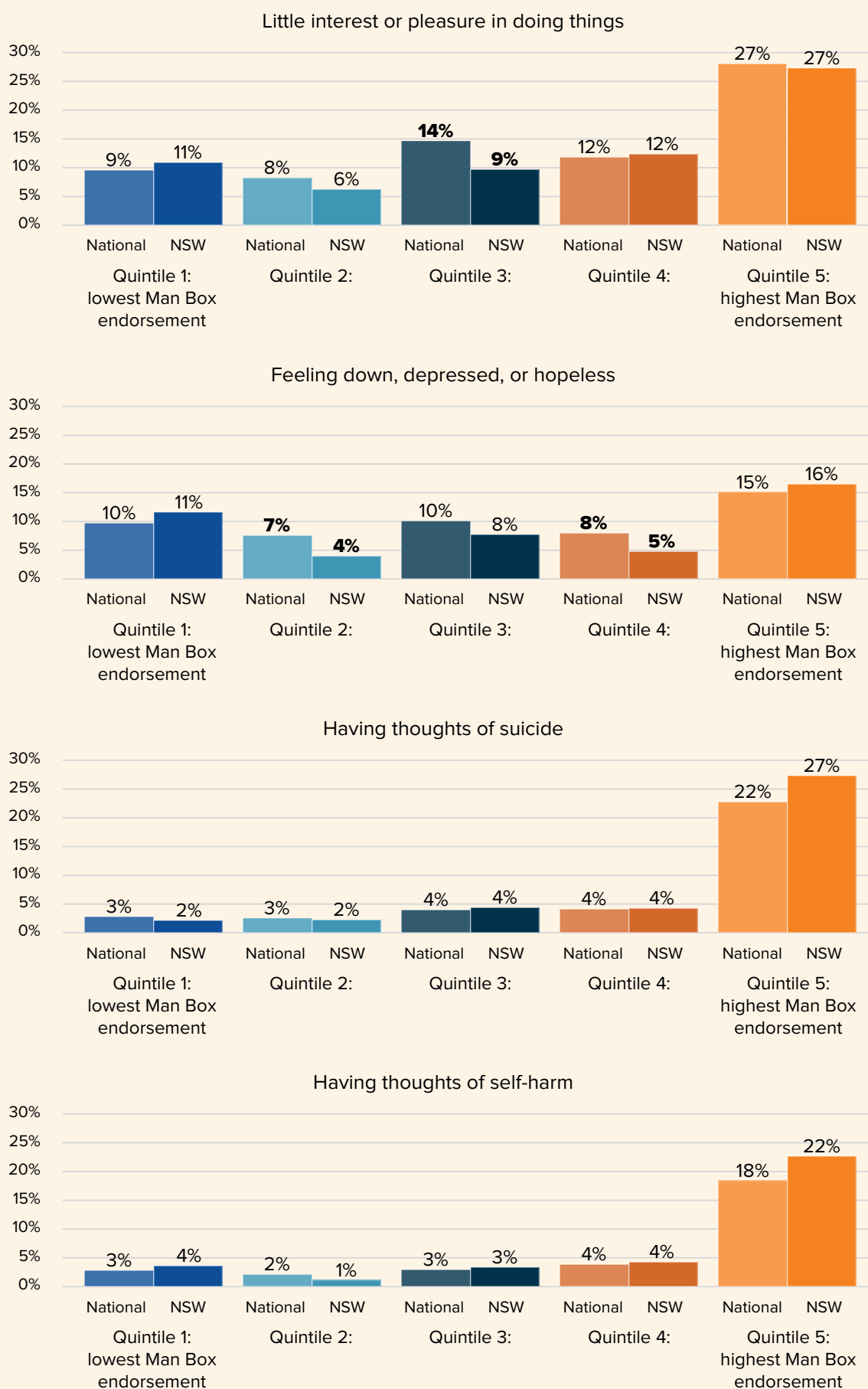


Figure 7.51: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents who reported experiencing frequent symptoms of poor mental health by Man Box quintile, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who experienced the symptom nearly every day in the two weeks prior to the survey



When asked about having ‘little interest or pleasure in doing things’ at some stage over the two-week period, or ‘feeling down, depressed or hopeless’, incidence was higher (as might be expected at the less extreme end of poor mental health indicators), but the contrast across quartiles was less evident. While the figures are high, they should be seen in the context of fluctuating moods according to the vagaries of everyday life. When young men were asked about feeling down or having little interest in activities nearly every day over the two-week period - a much clearer indicator of poor mental health - the incidence dropped significantly (see Figure 7.51). Approached through this lens, there is also a much clearer correlation with poor mental health and personal endorsement of Man Box rules. Those in quintile 5 were two and a half times more likely to consistently experience little interest in activities and one and a half times more likely to feel consistently depressed or hopeless than those in quintile 1.

Use of alcohol

This section examines the relationship between risky drinking and personal endorsement of the Man Box rules. Respondents were asked questions from the 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey to determine if they were frequent, binge or risky drinkers. Respondents were classified as a “frequent drinker” if they reported drinking five days a week or more. The second question categorised a respondent as a “binge drinker” if they reported consuming more than five standard drinks on one occasion. A respondent is assigned to the third category “risky drinking” if they meet the criteria of either or both of the “binge drinking” or “frequent drinking” categories.

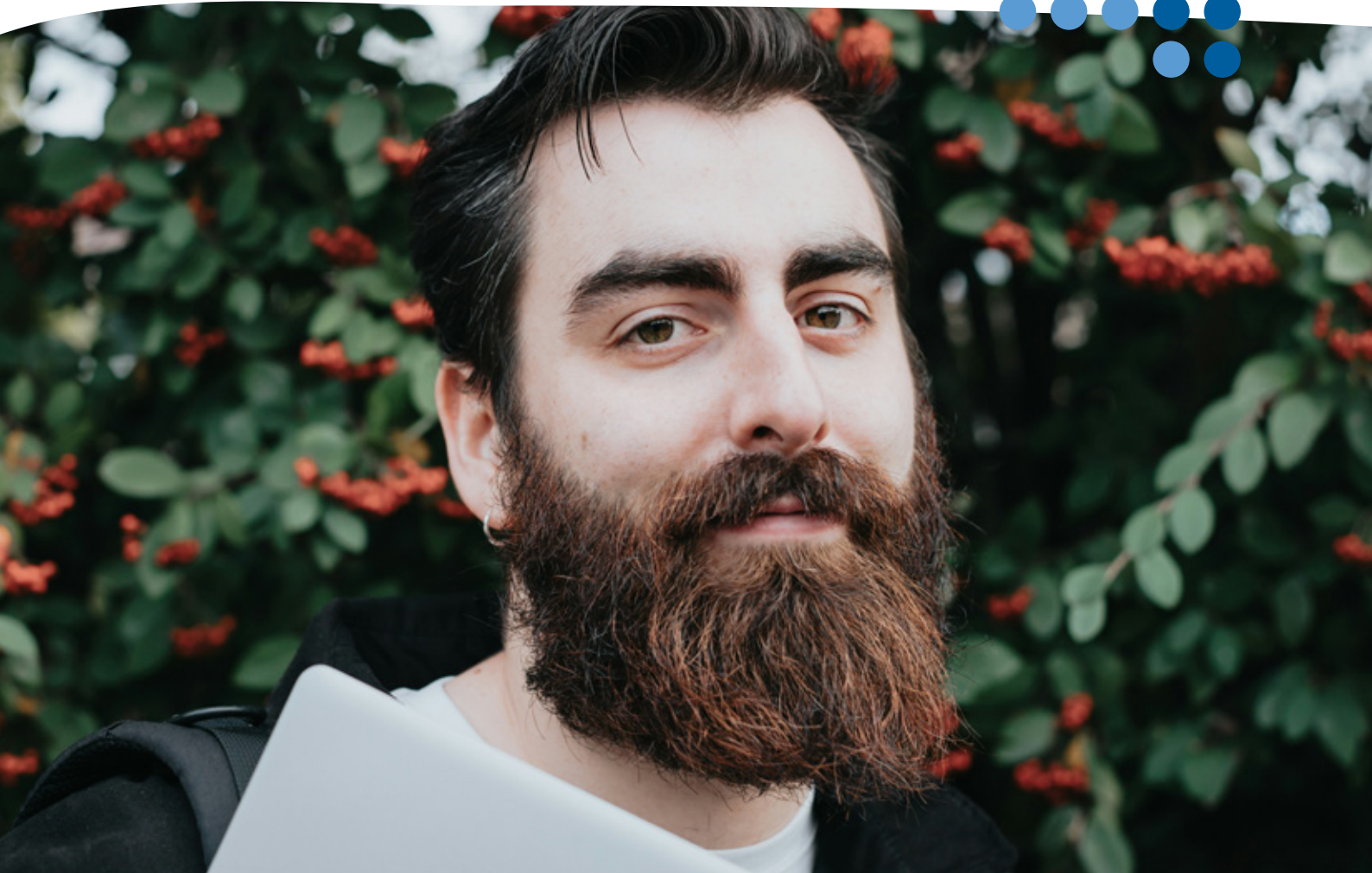
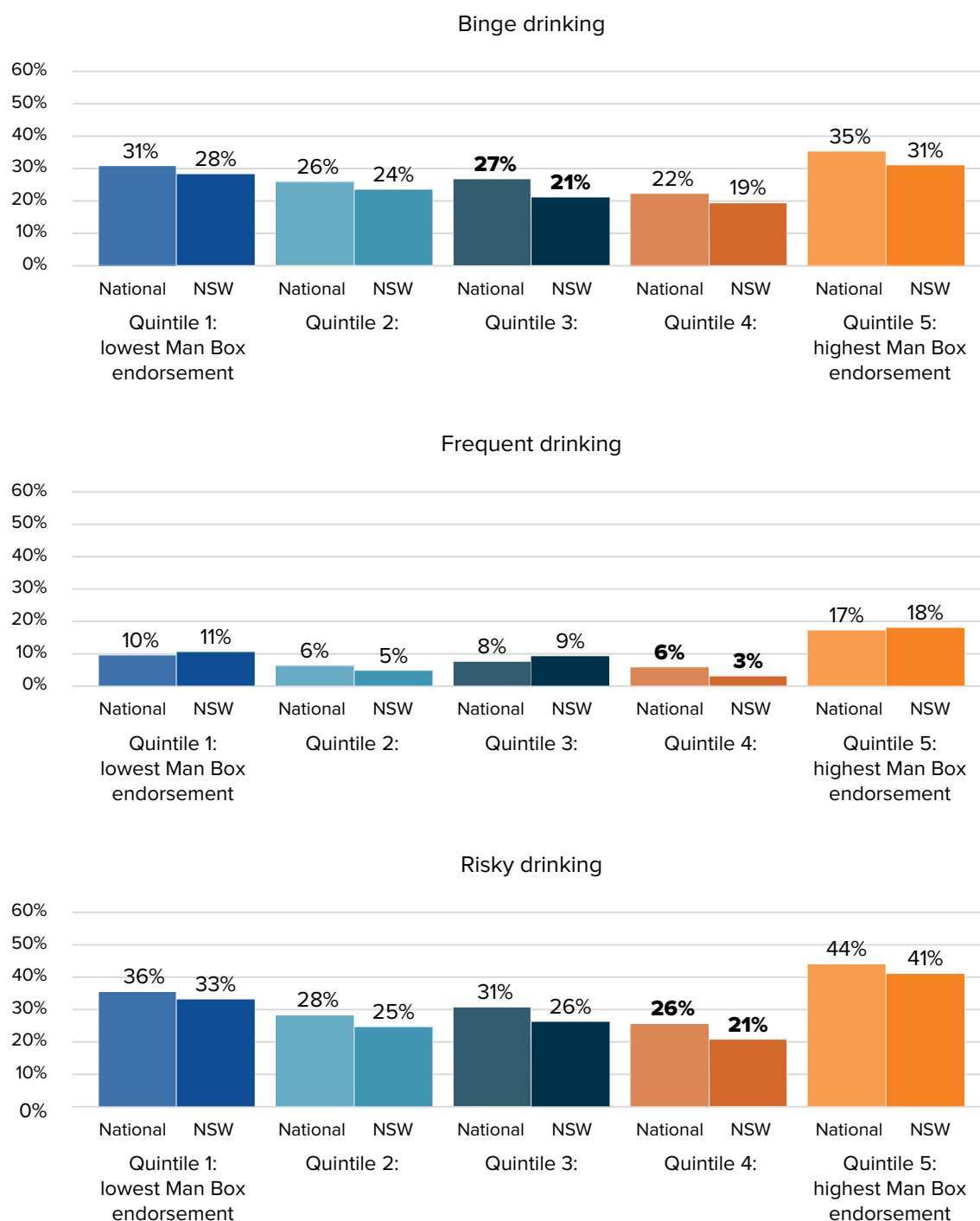


Figure 7.60: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents engaged in risky drinking, by Man Box quintile, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of survey respondents who met the criteria for each form of problem drinking



NSW men aged 18 to 30 who most strongly endorsed the Man Box rules were more likely to meet the criteria for risky drinking (41%) than men with lower endorsement of the Man Box rules (ranging from 21% to 33%).

Illicit drug use

As with alcohol, the Man Box survey sought to understand if there was an association between endorsement of rigid masculine norms and illicit drug use.

Figure 7.70 shows the proportion of NSW survey respondents aged 18 to 30 years who used illicit drugs in the previous six months.

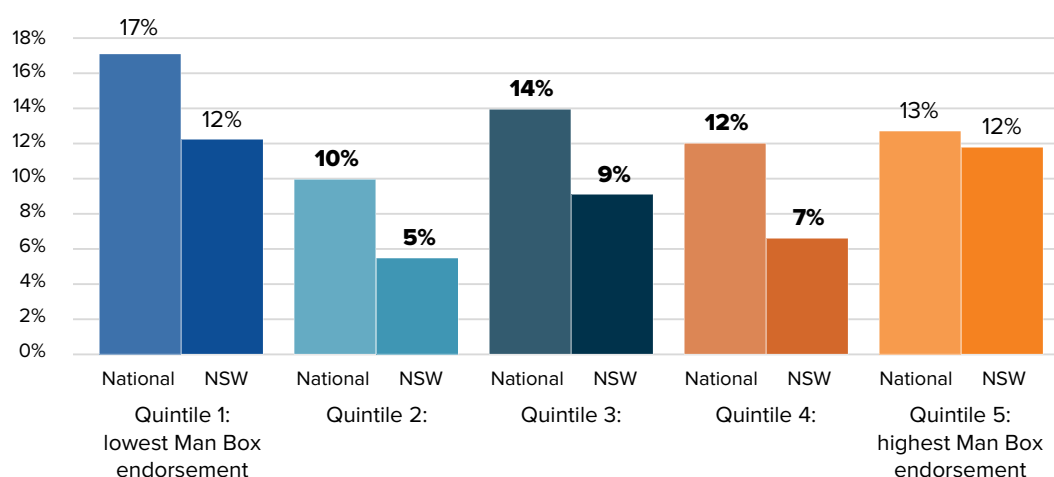
Figure 7.70: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents who used illicit drugs, 18-30 y.o. men



Nine percent of NSW survey respondents reported using illicit drugs in the previous six months, compared to 13% of national survey respondents.

Figure 7.71 shows the proportion of NSW survey respondents aged 18 to 30 years who used illicit drugs by Man Box quintile.

Figure 7.71: Proportion of NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents who used illicit drugs, by Man Box quintile, 18-30 y.o. men



There is no clear relationship between illicit drug use and endorsement of rigid masculine norms.

Additional exploratory analysis for NSW

The following sections G, H and I includes exploratory analysis of additional variables and relates to the younger cohort (18 to 30 year olds) only. It draws on data that was collected in the Man Box 2024 study but not included in the 2024 National Man Box Report due to time and capacity constraints. This research examines the additional data as it relates to NSW.

Section G: Anti-feminist attitudes and the Man Box

In this section of the report we discuss anti-feminist attitudes and focus specifically on the younger age cohort of 18 to 30 year old men. These anti-feminist attitudes comprise two parts - attitudes towards violence against women and attitudes that deny gender equality - and are taken from the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS). Survey respondents were asked if they agreed with the following attitudes taken from the NCAS:

Violence against women

- ‘Many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false’
- ‘Sometimes a woman can make a man so angry that he hits her when he doesn’t mean to’
- ‘Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family’

Denial of gender equality

- ‘Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia’
- ‘Many women don’t fully appreciate all that men do for them’
- ‘Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist’

We asked young men if they agreed with these statements, and then considered any relationship with strong anti-feminist views and endorsement of rigid masculine norms.

In Section H, we dive deeper into the impact of these same anti-feminist views by examining their association with perpetration of intimate partner violence. Finally, in Section I, we look at their relationship with other behaviours that have already been examined from the Man Box perspective. This analysis was not featured in the National Man Box report.

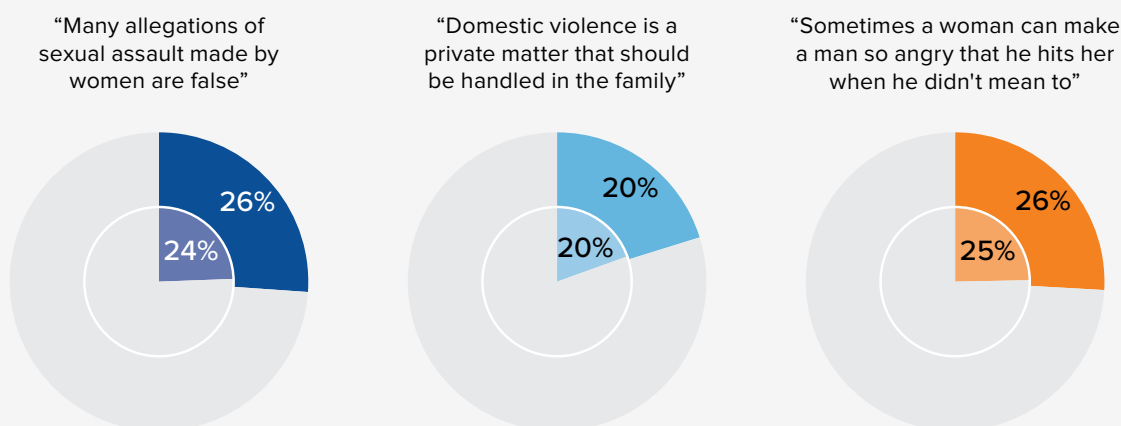
Attitudes towards violence against women

NSW respondents aged 18 to 30 years reported similar attitudes to the national cohort, as shown in Figure 8.10. In particular, we found:

- 26% agreed with the statement that ‘many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false’.
- 20% agreed with the statement that ‘domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family’.
- 26% agreed with the statement that ‘sometimes a woman can make a man so angry that he hits her when he didn’t mean to’.

Figure 8.10: Proportion of men who agreed with statements which support violence against women, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Highlighted segment shows percentage of men who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement



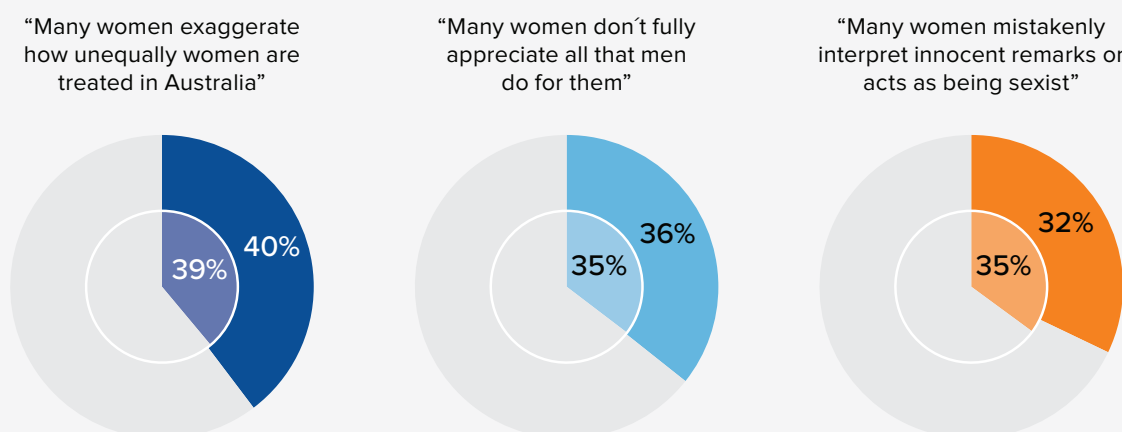
Attitudes that deny gender equality

Attitudes towards gender equality amongst NSW young men surveyed were also roughly in line with the national cohort, as shown in Figure 8.11. We found:

- 40% agreed with the statement that 'Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia'
- 36% agreed with the statement that 'Many women don't fully appreciate all that men do for them'.
- 32% agree with the statement that 'Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist'.

Figure 8.11: Proportion of men who agreed with statements which deny experiences of gender inequality and demonstrate mistrust of women's reports of violence, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Highlighted segment shows percentage of men who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement



More NSW respondents agreed with statements that deny gender equality, compared to those who agreed with statements that supported violence against women. This suggests that some respondents reject forms of violence supportive attitudes but hold attitudes which deny gender inequality.

The relationship between rigid masculine norms and anti-feminist attitudes

Attitudes towards violence against women

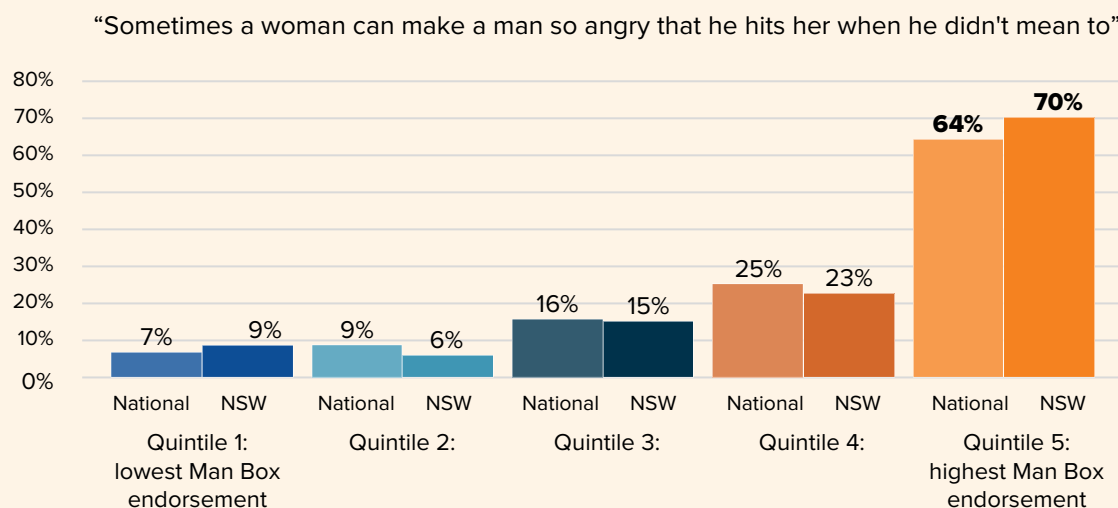
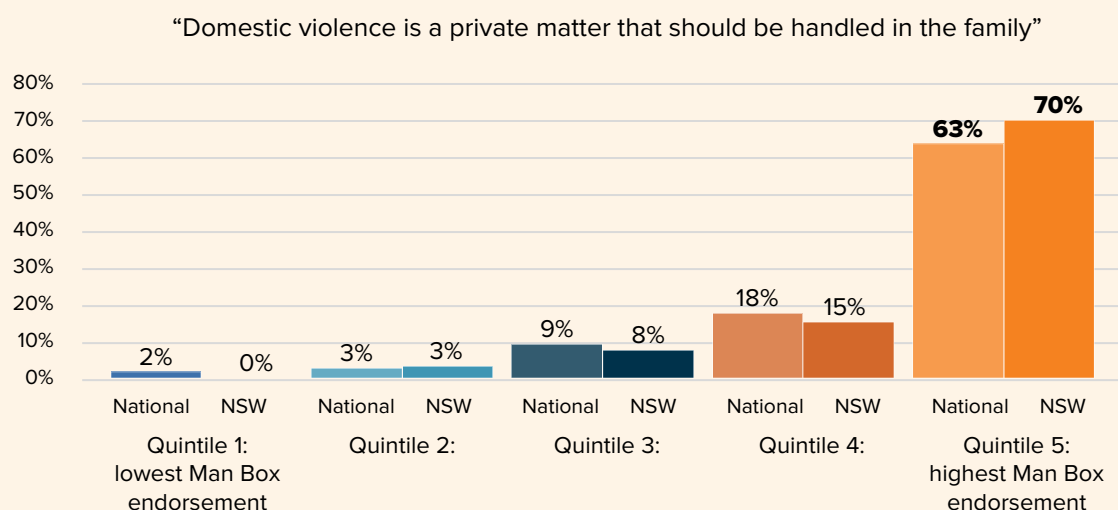
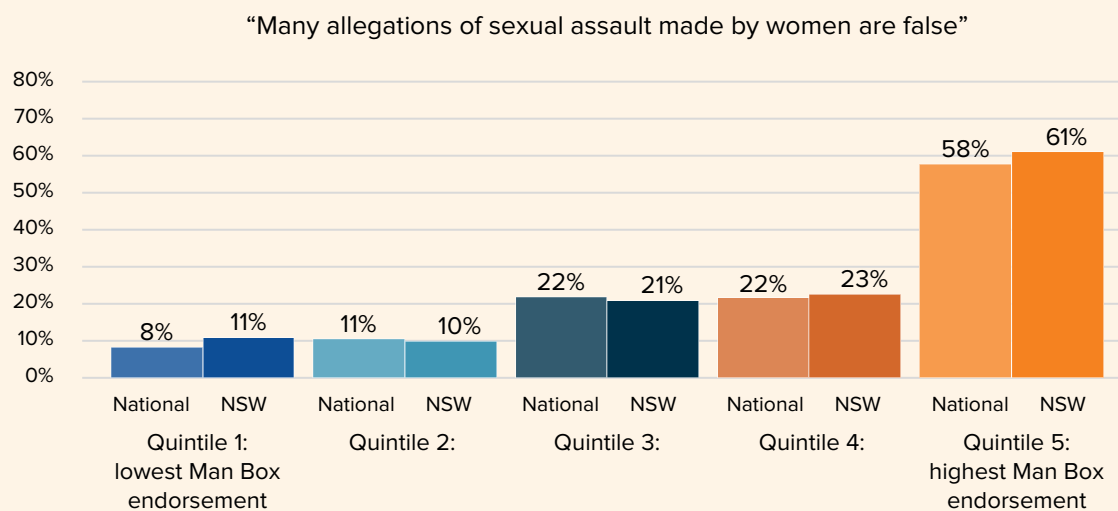
The data reveals a strong association between higher rates of Man Box endorsement and higher rates of agreement with statements that support or enable violence against women. **Young men in quintile 5 were nearly eight times more likely to justify someone hitting a woman in anger than those in quintile 1. Even starker, the distribution of attitudes regarding domestic violence being “a private matter” show 70% of those in quintile 5 believe this, compared with zero of those in quintile 1.**

Figure 8.20 maps the attitudes of young men by Man Box quintile, showing NSW responses relative to the national cohort.



Figure 8.20: Proportion of men who agreed with statements which support violence against women, by Man Box quintile, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who responded agree or strongly agree to each statement



There is a considerable increase in the proportion of men who agree with statements which support violence against women in quintile 5, compared to quintile 4. This suggests that even modestly less endorsement of the Man Box rules is associated with a considerable reduction in the proportion of men who agree with statements which support violence against women.

A greater proportion of NSW men in quintile 5 agree with statements which support violence against women, compared with the proportion of national respondents in quintile 5.

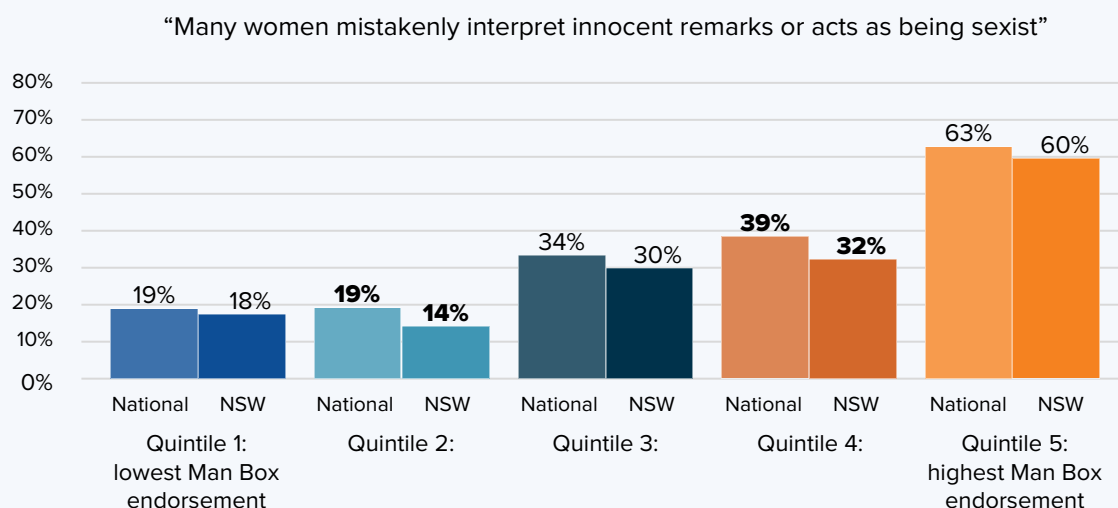
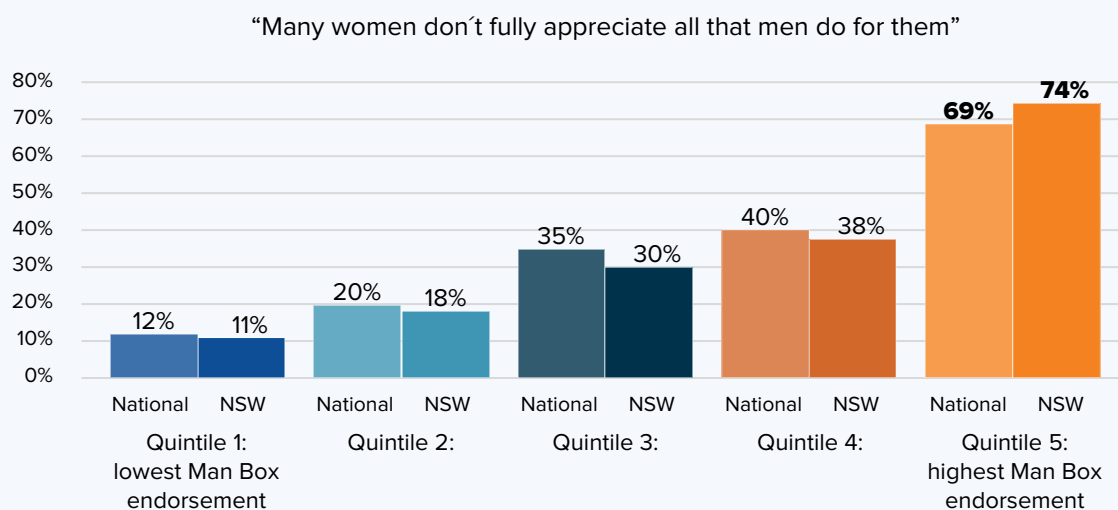
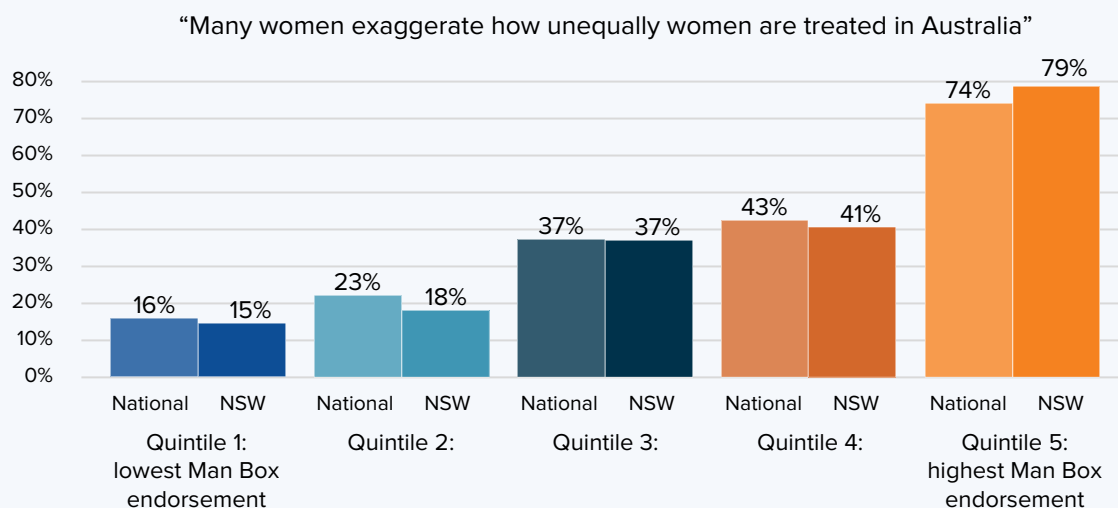
Attitudes that deny gender equality

The data shows a clear positive relationship between the endorsement of Man Box rules and holding attitudes denying gender inequality and mistrusting women's reports of violence (see Figure 8.21). Between 60% and 79% of NSW men in quintile 5 (those with the highest endorsement of the Man Box rules) agreed with statements denying gender inequality. By comparison, between 11% and 18% of NSW men in quintile 1 (those with the lowest endorsement of the Man Box rules) agreed with statements denying gender inequality.



Figure 8.21: Proportion of men who agreed with statements which deny gender inequality and mistrust women reports of violence, by Man Box quintile, NSW survey respondents compared to national survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who responded agree or strongly agree to each statement



Interestingly, even men who have the lowest endorsement of Man Box rules score higher than might be expected for some anti-feminist attitude statements.

This indicates that it is possible to have relatively progressive personal beliefs about masculine norms, while still holding particular attitudes that deny gender inequality or condone gendered violence.

Of NSW respondents with the lowest personal endorsement of Man Box rules (quintile 1): 18% agreed 'Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist'; 15% agreed 'Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia'; 11% agreed 'Many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false'; 11% agreed 'Many women don't fully appreciate all that men do for them'; and 9% agreed 'Sometimes a woman can make a man so angry that he hits her when he didn't mean to'. As a point of comparison, 0% of NSW men in quintile 1 agreed that 'Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family'.

Gender equality tells its own story. There is a positive correlation between rigid masculine norms and agreement with statements that deny gender inequality,

however men with the less rigid ideas of masculinity still hold attitudes that deny gender inequality. Between 60% and 79% of NSW men with the highest endorsement of the Man Box rules agreed with statements denying gender inequality, compared to between 11% and 18% of NSW men with the lowest endorsement of the Man Box rules.

Additional progress can be made in advancing gender equality.

When we independently look at anti-feminist attitudes and the association with the perpetration of intimate partner violence we found that agreement with anti-feminist attitudes was associated with a greater likelihood of using intimate partner violence. This is particularly true for one of the anti-feminist attitudes: agreement with the sentiment 'Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family' is more strongly associated with IPV than the other anti-feminist statements.



Section H: Anti-feminist attitudes and the perpetration of physical and sexual intimate partner violence

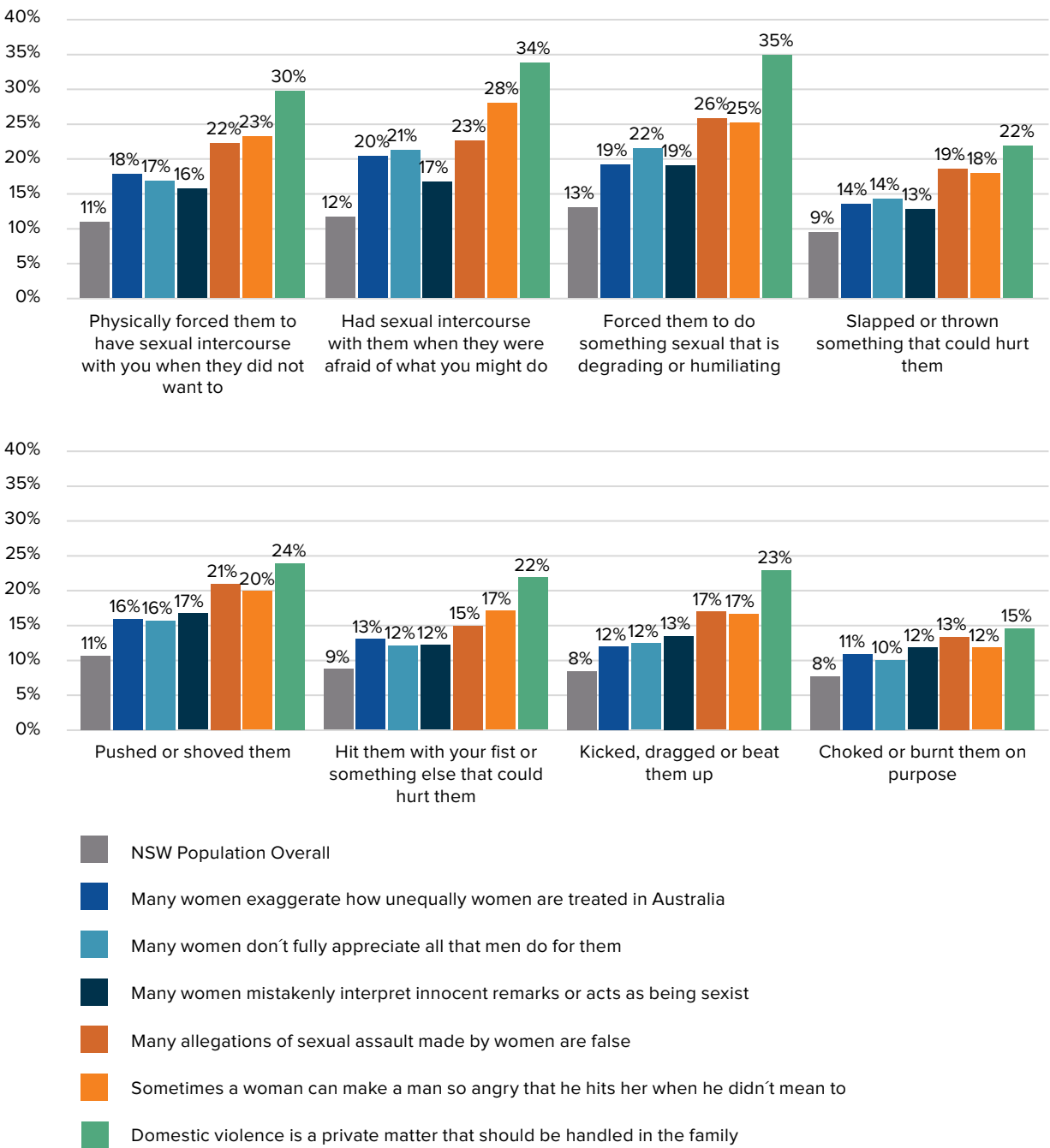
In Section F of this report, we examined the relationship between endorsement of rigid masculine norms (ie Man Box beliefs) and the perpetration of intimate partner violence. In Section G, we considered the association between endorsement of Man Box beliefs and holding anti-feminist attitudes. In understanding the inter-relationship between these beliefs and behaviours as a whole, we now turn to considering any alignment between anti-feminist attitudes and perpetration of intimate partner violence.

Figure 9.10 depicts the relationship between agreeing with a particular anti-feminist statement (e.g. 'Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia') and the use of particular forms of intimate partner violence. For those who agreed with each anti-feminist sentiment ('agreed' or 'strongly agreed'), the graph shows the percentage of respondents who reported ever using a form of physical or sexual violence against a current or former intimate partner. It also depicts the percentage of the NSW population overall (that is, all 18 to 30 year old respondents in the study) who used each form of violence – which provides a point of comparison.



Figure 9.10: Relationship between anti-feminist sentiments and violence, NSW respondents only, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who have used violence versus agreement with anti-feminist sentiments (agree or strongly agree)



Overall, the results show that NSW men who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely to have engaged in intimate partner violence than NSW men in general. This is especially true of men who agree with the statement that ‘Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family’.

For men who agreed with the statement that domestic violence is a private matter:

- 35% have forced their partners to do something degrading or humiliating (compared with 13% of NSW men in general).
- 34% have had sexual intercourse with their partner when they were afraid (compared with 12% of NSW men in general).
- 30% had physically forced their partner to have sexual intercourse when they didn’t want to (compared with 11% of NSW men in general).

The finding that NSW young men who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely than NSW young men in general to have engaged in intimate partner violence is consistent with the previous finding that men who personally endorse Man Box rules are more likely to have engaged in violence. There is a strong correlation between belief in the Man Box rules and endorsement of anti-feminist attitudes, so it is not unexpected to see the correlation flow through to perpetration of intimate partner violence.

The variation of results across the anti-feminist statements is interesting. Agreement with the anti-feminist sentiment ‘Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family’ is more likely to predict a man’s use of intimate partner violence (especially sexual violence) than agreement with the anti-feminist sentiment ‘Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia’ or ‘Many women don’t fully appreciate all that men do for them’.

The anti-feminist statements that support violence against women are more predictive of a man’s use of violence compared to the anti-feminist statements that reject gender equality.

This research shows a concerning prevalence of attitudes that support violence against women, particularly among men who also adhere to rigid gender norms. A very high proportion (between 61% and 70%) of NSW men with the strongest agreement with rigid masculine norms agreed with statements that condone violence against women. However, by comparison, between 0% and 11% of NSW men with the lowest endorsement of the Man Box rules agreed with statements that support violence against women.

Section I: Anti-feminist attitudes and other behaviours

Having considered the relationship between anti-feminist attitudes and perpetration of intimate partner violence, we now consider the relationship with other behaviours as well as mental health problems.

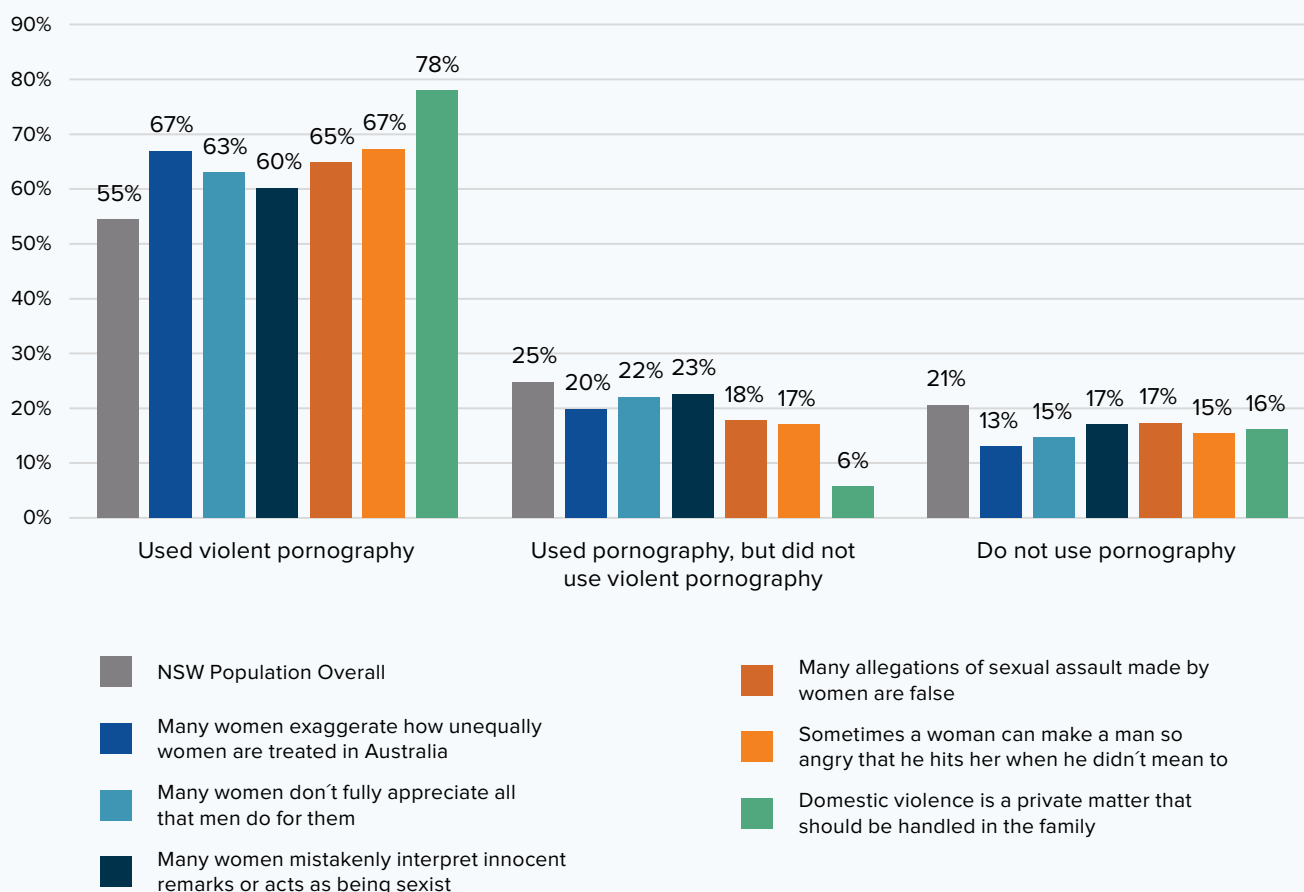
Use of pornography

We examined the relationship between viewing pornography and agreeing with a particular anti-feminist statement (e.g. 'Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia'). Figure 10.10 shows, among those who reported viewing a particular type of pornography in the last six months, the percentage of respondents who agreed with each anti-feminist sentiment ('agreed' or 'strongly agreed'). The percentage of the NSW population overall (that is, all 18 to 30 year old respondents in the study) who used each type of pornography is included for comparison.



Figure 10.10: Relationship between anti-feminist sentiments and pornography, NSW respondents only, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents use of pornography versus agreement with anti-feminist sentiments (agree or strongly agree)



Overall, the results show that NSW young men who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely to have used violent pornography than NSW young men in general. This is especially true of men who agree with the statement that 'Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family' 78% of these young men had used violent pornography in the last six months (compared with 55% of NSW men in general).

The finding that NSW young men who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely than NSW young men in general to have used violent pornography is consistent with the previous finding that men who personally endorse Man Box rules are more likely to have used violent pornography. Agreement with the anti-feminist sentiment 'Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family' is more likely to predict

a man's use of violent pornography than agreement with the other anti-feminist sentiments.

Research from longitudinal, experimental, and correlational studies indicates pornography use is a risk factor for committing sexual violence (Brem, MJ., Garner, AR., Grigorian, H. et al. 2018) (Jongsma, K. & Timmons Fritz, P. 2022).

Violent pornography depicts aggressive acts, predominantly against women, which may influence viewers' attitudes and behaviours towards their partners. There is a concern that repeated exposure to violent pornographic content can desensitise viewers to aggression, which in turn makes violent behaviours seem acceptable or normal within intimate relationships (Vasquez, Daspe, Bothe, et al 2024).

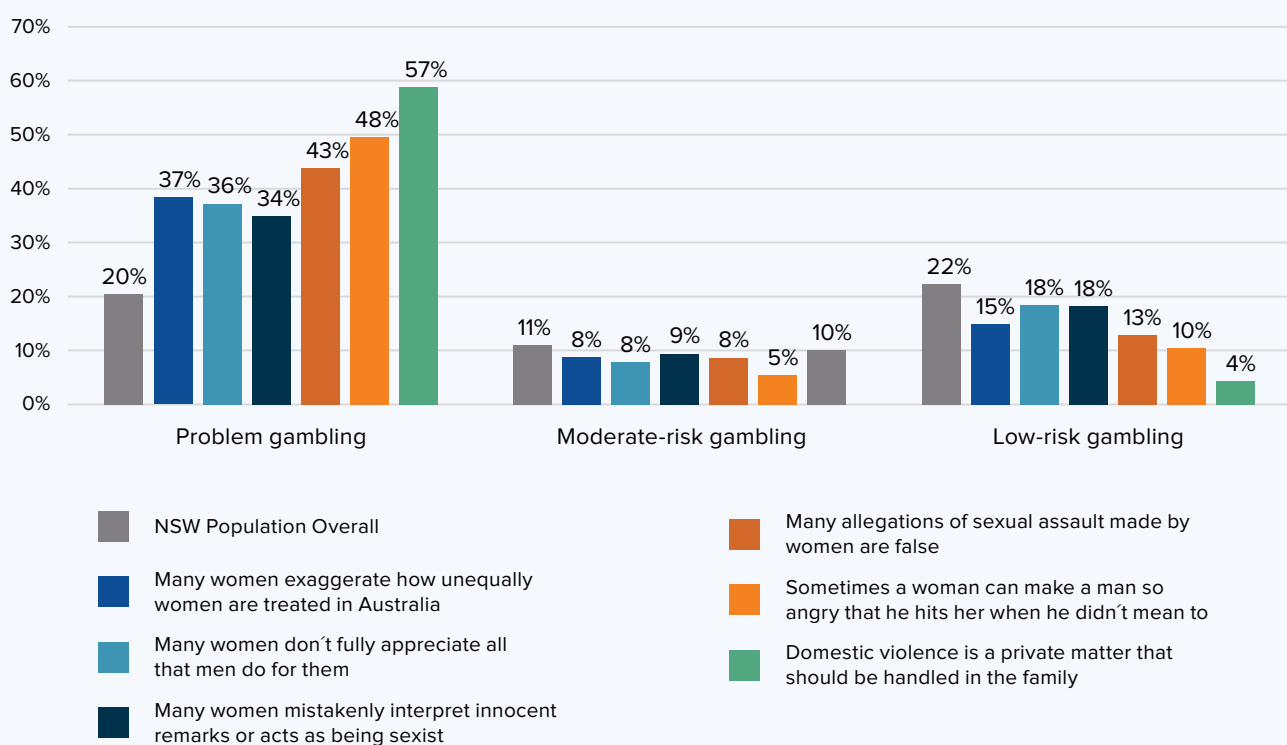
Use of gambling

The research shows that NSW young men who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely to have engaged in problem gambling than NSW young men in general. For example, for men who agreed with the sentiment ‘Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family’, 57% met the criteria for problem gambling.

Figure 10.20 depicts the relationship between agreeing with a particular anti-feminist statement (e.g. ‘Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia’) and use of gambling in the previous 12 months. It shows the percentage of respondents who met the criteria for different gambling risk levels and compares this to agreement with each anti-feminist sentiment (‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’).

Figure 10.20: Relationship between anti-feminist sentiments and gambling risk level, NSW respondents only, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who have engaged in gambling versus agreement with anti-feminist sentiments (agree or strongly agree)



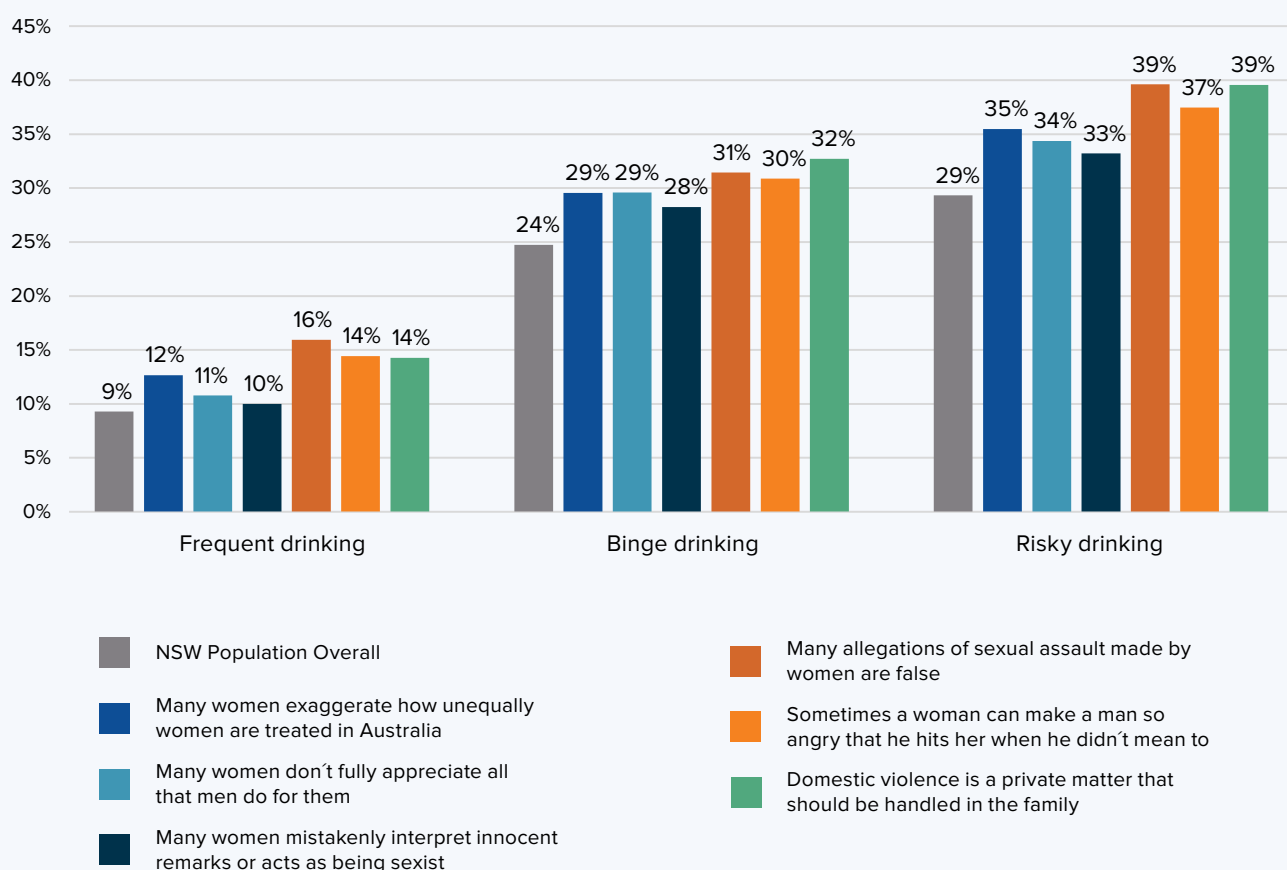
The finding that NSW young men who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely to have engaged in problem gambling than NSW young men in general is consistent with the previous finding that men who personally endorse Man Box rules are more likely to have engaged in problem gambling. Once again, the association was stronger for those who agree with the anti-feminist attitudes relating to violence than those who agreed with statements relating to gender inequality.

Use of alcohol

Figure 10.30 depicts the relationship between the consumption of alcohol and agreeing with a particular anti-feminist statement (e.g. 'Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia').

Figure 10.30: Relationship between anti-feminist sentiments and drinking behaviour, NSW respondents only, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who meet the criteria for each form of problem drinking versus agreement with anti-feminist sentiments (agree or strongly agree)



Overall, the results show that NSW men who agree with anti-feminist statements are more likely to be frequent, binge and risky drinkers than NSW men in general. This finding is consistent with the previous finding that men who most strongly endorse Man Box rules are more likely to engage in binge drinking, frequent drinking and risky drinking.

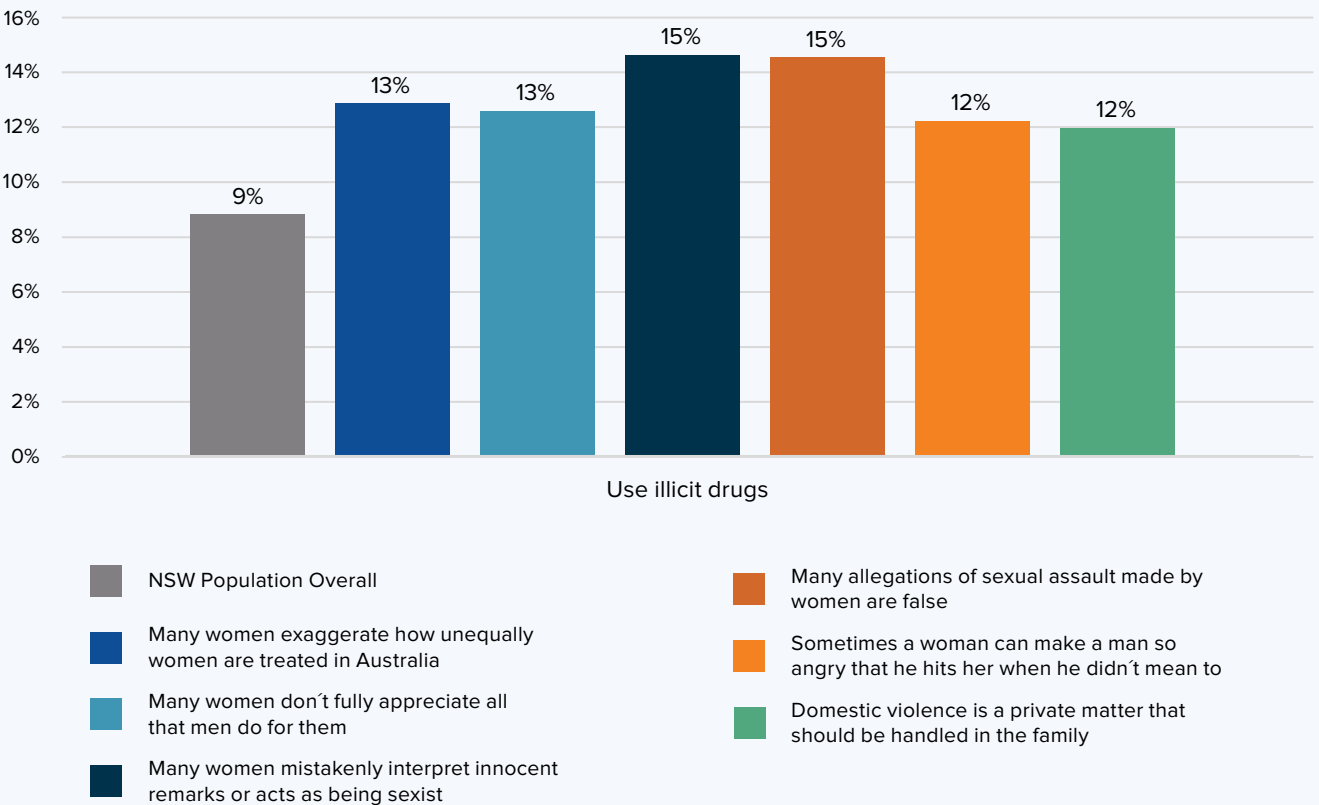
Use of illicit drugs

The data suggests that among NSW men who agree with anti-feminist statements, a slightly greater proportion have used illicit drugs when compared with the NSW population (see Figure 10.40).

This contrasts with the lack of linear relationship between Man Box endorsement and illicit drug use; reported rates of illicit drug use are slightly higher amongst men with the lowest Man Box endorsement when compared to other quintiles.

Figure 10.40: Relationship between anti-feminist sentiments and usage of illicit drugs, NSW respondents only, 18-30 y.o. men

Percentage of respondents who have used illicit drugs versus agreement with anti-feminist sentiments (agree or strongly agree)





Conclusion

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a common form of violence against women. It includes the use of physical or sexual violence and emotional and psychological abuse between individuals who are in an intimate relationship. Data on the victimisation rates in Australia is largely drawn from the Australian Personal Safety Survey and police data. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021-22 Personal Safety Survey found an estimated 794,100 women (25%) have experienced violence, emotional abuse or economic abuse by a partner they live with since the age of 15 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021-2022). There are approximately 2,500 reports of domestic violence to NSW police every month, but this likely represents only 40% of actual incidents due to underreporting (BOCSAR 2024).

While there is limited data on the perpetration of IPV in NSW, there is an increasing understanding on the risk factors for perpetrating IPV. They can pertain to individual characteristics, relationship factors and broader societal factors. Some of these individual risk factors relate to adverse childhood experiences including witnessing interparental violence and being subject to abuse. Other individual risk factors for the perpetration of IPV are attitudinal such as holding attitudes supporting inequitable gender norms, while others pertain to behaviours including alcohol use and gambling. Community risk factors can include high rates of violence and crime, unemployment, weak community sanctions against intimate partner violence and cultural norms that support aggression towards others (WHO 2025) (CDC 2024).

Given the multiple and intersecting risk factors for the perpetration of IPV, the NSW analysis of the Man Box data sought to explore the relationship between rigid masculine norms or anti-feminist attitudes on the one hand and a range of negative outcomes including perpetration of IPV on the other. The analysis also sought to understand the connection between Man Box beliefs and anti-feminist attitudes, both of which in isolation show an association with perpetration of IPV.

Men have a crucial role in preventing violence against women, not just as it relates to not using violence themselves, but also as allies. This report adds to the growing body of evidence demonstrating the correlation between adherence to stereotypical beliefs around manhood and a range of problematic behaviours, including the perpetration of intimate partner violence. Diving deeper into state-focused data from The Man Box 2024 research, also expands analysis to new areas, uncovering associations between holding anti-feminist beliefs and such problematic behaviours.

A concerning number of young men ascribe to rigid stereotypical masculine norms in a way that can have far-reaching implications. More than two in five feel pressure to act strong even when scared and a third feel pressure to fight back when pushed around. Given men who most strongly endorse Man Box rules are much more

likely to use various forms of violence, including physical and sexual violence against an intimate partner, such findings point to the need for critical reflection on how rigid masculine norms are communicated and reinforced.

The harm is not just done to others, but to men themselves. Those men who most strongly agree with Man Box rules are more likely to experience symptoms of poor mental health, including higher rates of suicidal ideation, as well as viewing violent pornography, engaging in problem gambling or risky use of alcohol. In a vicious cycle, these factors all increase the risk of intimate partner violence.

Supporting Australian men to understand, critique and negotiate the norms of the Man Box provides a pathway to change. Greater support for gender equality, rejection of violence against women and supporting men to determine their own values outside of social pressure are likely to contribute to reducing violence against women and others. The potential positive impacts are far-reaching — for men themselves, the people in their lives, and the broader community.





Appendix A: References

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Appendix B: Survey sample demographic characteristics

Demographic variable	% of sample 18-30 years	% of NSW male population 18-30 years*	% of sample 31-45 years
Age			
18-24	38%	51%	0%
25-30	62%	49%	0%
31-39	0%	-	69%
40-45	0%	-	31%
Metro v Regional			
Metro	86%	70%	77%
Regional	14%	30%	23%
Country of Birth			
Australia	90%	72%	78%
Other	10%	28%	22%
Language spoken at home			
English	89%	69%	80%
Another language	11%	31%	20%
Sexuality			
Straight / heterosexual	93%	Not available	92%
Gay, bisexual and other	7%	Not available	8%
Religion			
No religion	45%	46%	51%
Christian religions	40%	38%	33%
Buddhism	3%	3%	3%
Islam	5%	6%	3%
Hinduism	6%	6%	5%
Other	1%	2%	5%
Highest level of education			
Below Year 12 completion	8%	13%	9%
Finished year 12	13%	32%	7%
Trade Apprenticeship / Certificate	13%	17%	15%
Diploma to Postgraduate-level	64%	29%	69%
Prefer not to say	1%	8%	1%
Paid work in the last week			
Yes	76%	73%	89%
No	24%	27%	11%
Currently studying			
Full time study	32%	22%	23%
Part time study	10%	11%	2%
Not currently enrolled	59%	67%	75%

Appendix C: Man Box scores by demographic variables

Figure 11.10: Man Box statistics by demographic variables, NSW respondents, 18-45 y.o. men, 2021

Mean Man Box score, standard deviation, and sample size by demographic group

Demographic variable	Mean Man Box score, standard deviation (sd=), sample size (n=)	
	18-30 years	31-45 years
Age		
18-24	1.94 (sd=0.54, n=359)	
25-30	2.07 (sd=0.59, n=591)	
31-39		1.98 (sd=0.58, n=223)
40-45		1.82 (sd=0.53, n=101)
Metro v Regional		
Metro	2.05 (sd=0.58, n=819)	1.99 (sd=0.58, n=249)
Regional	1.81 (sd=0.49, n=131)	1.73 (sd=0.48, n=75)
Country of Birth		
Australia	2.04 (sd=0.58, n=853)	1.97 (sd=0.60, n=252)
Other	1.81 (sd=0.47, n=97)	1.81 (sd=0.44, n=72)
Language spoken at home		
English	2.03 (sd=0.58, n=850)	1.98 (sd=0.59, n=259)
Another language	1.91 (sd=0.53, n=100)	1.74 (sd=0.46, n=65)
Sexuality		
Straight / heterosexual	2.04 (sd=0.57, n=886)	1.96 (sd=0.57, n=297)
Gay, bisexual and other	1.71 (sd=0.54, n=64)	1.57 (sd=0.49, n=27)
Religion		
No religion	1.92 (sd=0.50, n=432)	1.88 (sd=0.52, n=165)
Christianity / Islam / Hinduism / Other	2.10 (sd=0.61, n=518)	1.99 (sd=0.61, n=159)
Highest level of education		
Below Year 12 completion	2.07 (sd=0.59, n=73)	2.02 (sd=0.49, n=29)
Completed year 12	1.95 (sd=0.49, n=126)	1.70 (sd=0.58, n=22)
Trade or technical certificate / diploma	1.99 (sd=0.54, n=128)	1.83 (sd=0.55, n=47)
Bachelors or postgraduate degree	2.04 (sd=0.59, n=609)	1.96 (sd=0.58, n=223)