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Misogyny, Online Radicalisation, and Youth Extremism in Australia

Research Report

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Executive Summary

Many young Australians hold concerning attitudes towards women, violence against women, gender equality, and violent extremism. This report details the findings of an Australian government-funded research project into misogyny and youth radicalisation in Australia and presents evidence-based policy recommendations arising from a comprehensive, multi-method research program on misogyny, online behaviour, and violent extremism in Australia.

The study examines the extent to which Australian adolescents and adults hold and endorse misogynistic attitudes, attitudes permissive of violence against women, and violent extremist attitudes. It is the first of its kind in Australia to provide a far-reaching picture of social and psychological measures amongst adolescents aged 13-17 years and to collect comparative data with Australian adults.

This report details both the prevalence of troubling gender attitudes and extremist attitudes across genders and generations in Australia, as well as the relationship between these sets of attitudes. Based on a survey of 1122 young people aged between 13-17 years, of all genders, and of 2307 adults, of all genders, in October-November 2025, this report shines a light on the realities of hostile social and political attitudes in Australia today.

The findings collectively establish that misogyny is not a peripheral or incidental feature of violent extremism in Australia, but a central, crosscutting predictor of extremist orientations across the full ideological spectrum – from incel ideology and religious extremism to white supremacy and right-wing politics. Attitudes that normalise and excuse violence against women (VAW) are the single strongest attitudinal predictor of violent extremism, exceeding the predictive power of all measured online behavioural variables.

Key findings	
1	Misogyny is a robust, crosscutting predictor of violent extremism
2	VAW attitudes are the dominant, proximal predictor of extremism
3	Online environments amplify but do not create extremist orientation
4	Teachers are at the front line of dealing with these problems in real time

Challenges we are facing

- A concerning proportion of adolescent boys and girls express misogynistic attitudes and attitudes permissive of violence against women.
- Roughly 1/3 of teenaged boys express misogynistic attitudes, mistrust of women, and a belief in ‘traditional’ gender roles.
- Teenaged boys are the most likely in our sample to agree with a range of violent extremist attitudes, with over 26% agreeing with right-wing extremist attitudes and 27% agreeing with white supremacist attitudes.
- 30-35% of boys and men of all ages express the belief that gender equality measures have gone too far; 24-29% believe that feminism is a hate movement.
- Gen Z and Millennial male respondents and Gen Z female respondents are the most likely to agree with all forms of violent extremist attitudes.
- Particular online environments are more likely to produce both problematic gender attitudes and attitudes supportive of violent extremism, but not the ones we typically assume. These are: online dating; pornography use; and engagement with ‘manfluencers’.

Given these challenges, this report makes policy recommendations across four priority domains: national security and counter-extremism frameworks; platform regulation and algorithmic accountability; education and prevention; and institutional support for practitioners.

Much work is being done across state and federal government agencies to tackle the associated issues of youth misogyny and youth radicalisation. It is hoped that the information in this report can inform further efforts to address the influences of social attitudes and reduce harms associated with misogynistic and extremist attitudes in Australia.

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Introduction

In Australia, the threat of extremist ideologies and hate-fuelled violence is on the rise¹. The 2025 Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy, *A Safer Australia*, acknowledges that “a growing number of Australians are being radicalised to violence, and radicalised to violence more quickly”². This national strategy focuses on young people as particularly susceptible to radicalisation. Currently, there are over 200 active participants in countering violent extremism programs in Australia, of which 2/3 are between the ages of 10 and 24 years old, and all of whom are male³.

Radicalisation in Australia is happening in the context of increased political polarisation, eroding trust in institutions, and rising anti-authority beliefs. Individuals – particularly young individuals – are drawn into extremist ideologies on the basis of personal grievance and perceived injustice⁴.

At the same time, there is growing recognition amongst government and security agencies that hostile gender attitudes – particularly misogyny – may be a gateway into violent extremist ideologies. Since 2019, the United Nations has recognised the “troubling commonality in terrorist attacks, extremist ideologies and brutal crimes: the violent misogyny of the perpetrators”⁵. The 2024 Australian Senate inquiry into right-wing extremist movements noted that misogyny and anti-feminist attitudes are key factors for understanding radicalisation in Australia today⁶. Research has long indicated a consistent correlation between misogynistic ideologies, gender-based violence, and extremism⁷, and the consistent element across forms of extremism of control over women’s bodies as central to their political project⁸.

The majority of terrorist and mass violence attacks perpetrated by Australians in the last decade have had misogynistic precursors. The Lindt Café terrorist had more than 40 sexual assault charges against him and an active intervention order for domestic violence, and was out on bail for murder and sexual assault charges for killing his former partner⁹. The Christchurch shooter’s manifesto

polemicised about ‘fertility levels’, ‘birth rates’ and the need for ‘brotherhood’ to restore a natural order¹⁰. The Bondi Junction killer was addicted to pornography and believed by many to be motivated to perpetrate mass violence by anger and frustration towards women¹¹.

Not only do the vast majority of mass violence perpetrators in Western countries have a history of misogynistic and/or gendered violence¹², the high coincidence of misogynistic ideologies and gendered violence with mass shootings in the US has led the US Secret Service to conclude that “misogyny can play a central role in motivating an attacker to perpetrate mass violence” and that “misogyny and domestic violence deserve increased attention from those tasked with mass violence prevention”¹³.

1 Burgess, M. (2024) Press conference – Parliament House, Canberra. 5 August 2024. <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/press-conference-parliament-house-canberra-27>.

2 Australian Government (2025) *A Safer Australia: Australia's Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*. <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing-subsite/Files/australias-counter-terrorism-violent-extremism-strategy.pdf>

3 Home Affairs (2025) Counter-Terrorism and VE Division presentation to closed forum.

4 Australian Government (2025) *A Safer Australia*. P. 12.

5 Guterres, A. (2019). UN General Assembly Address, United Nations Secretary General. September 2019.

6 Parliament of Australia (2024) *Right wing extremist movements in Australia. Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry*. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/RWExtremists23

7 Gentry, C (2020) *Disordered Violence: How Gender, Race and Heteronormativity Structure Terrorism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Bates, L (2020) *Men Who Hate Women: The Extremism Nobody is Talking About*. London: Simon & Schuster Ltd; Kaiser, S. (2022) *Political Masculinity*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Miller-Idriss, C. (2025) *Man Up: The New Misogyny & the Rise of Violent Extremism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

8 Ebner, J (2017). *The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing; Ebner (2020). *Going Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing; Miller-Idriss (2025).

9 Commonwealth of Australia (2015). *Martin Place Siege: Joint Commonwealth-New South Wales Review*. Canberra.

10 Wilson, C. et al. (2025) “The Role of Ideology in Motivating Lone Actor Terrorism: An Analysis of the Online Record of the Christchurch Terrorist,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 31(3), 380-400.

11 Gill, G. (2025). “Ladies and Gentlemen, We’re all Domestic Terrorists”: Incels on the Bondi Attack,” *Global Network on Extremism and Technology*. <https://gnet-research.org/2025/01/09/ladies-and-gentlemen-were-all-domestic-terrorists-incels-on-the-bondi-attack/>

12 Follman, M (2019) “Armed and Misogynist: How Toxic Masculinity Fuels Mass Shootings,” *Mother Jones* <https://www.motherjones.com/criminal-justice/2019/06/domestic-violence-misogyny-incels-mass-shootings/>; Smith, J., (2019). *Home grown: How domestic violence turns men into terrorists*. Hachette UK.

13 United States Secret Service (2023). “Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020,” National Threat Assessment Center. <https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-01/ussc-ntac-maps-2016-2020.pdf>

It is not just the fact that misogynistic attitudes and extremist ideologies frequently co-exist. Extremists are also leveraging misogynistic attitudes online for their recruitment in Australia¹⁴. Anti-women, and especially anti-feminist sentiments are a common feature across extremist ideologies¹⁵, many of which espouse the Great Replacement theory, explicitly linking women's reproductive roles to the political agenda of the group¹⁶. Many extremist groups espouse narratives that emphasize the 'survival of the nation' that requires, at a minimum, a return to traditional gender roles, the primacy of the patriarchal household within the state, and the subjugation of women to men's authority. Some of these groups also espouse forced marriage and forced childbirth to address declining birth rates¹⁷, and advocate for the establishment of a system of regulated sexual access to women and control over women's reproduction¹⁸.

Scholarship has noted the relationship between the centrality of control over women's bodies espoused by extremist groups and the construction of a specific, violent masculinity as a restorative measure to redress the perceived political, economic and social disorder to which these groups are reacting¹⁹. The mythologizing of a 'golden era' past of peak masculinity and ideal gender roles enables extremist groups of different ideologies to legitimise violence as restorative of a natural, but bygone order, and a corrective to the disorder caused by feminism and gender equality measures²⁰. As such, misogyny may serve as "an early warning sign of the growth of violent extremist ideology and practice, for both Islamist and far-right groups"²¹.

While data is limited, some empirical research has recently emerged that has found a strong correlation between misogynistic attitudes and extremist attitudes in general population surveys in the United Kingdom²², Libya, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines²³, and in Australia²⁴. These anti-women and anti-feminist sentiments are not restricted to the usual suspects like incel extremists, but common across extremist ideologies and worryingly common amongst the general population in Australia²⁵.

Given the growing recognition of the relationship of misogynistic attitudes and violent extremism, and given the worrying rates of youth radicalisation in Australia, this research project seeks to investigate the relationship between misogynistic attitudes and youth radicalisation in Australia.

Research Question and Aims

This research was guided by the question:

To what degree is misogyny predictive of ideological extremism and support for violent extremism amongst Australian youth, and what are the social contexts generative of these ideologies amongst Australian youth?

This project aimed to examine *why* and *how* radicalisation is occurring in Australia, and what is the relationship between attitudes and practices of misogyny and support for various forms of ideological extremism in Australia?

While scholars have long posed a number of factors as the *cause* of radicalisation (mental health, loneliness, poverty, religiosity, education, marginalisation), this study looked at whether there are particular gendered attitudes that may be driving radicalisation and whether young Australians are more or less likely to express misogynistic and/or extremist ideologies.

14 Roose et al. (2022) *Anti-Women Attitudes and Extremism: Empirical Evidence from the Australian Context*. Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies. Deakin University. <https://www.crisconsortium.org/antiwomen-attitudes-and-violent-extremism-1>

15 Kaiser (2022); Meger et al. (2024) *Misogyny, Racism and Violent Extremism in Australia*. Policy Report. The University of Melbourne.

16 Roose, J. and J. Cook (2025). "Supreme men, subjected women: Gender inequality and violence in jihadist, far right and male supremacist ideologies," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 48(5): 528-556.

17 Belew, K. (2018). *Bringing the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

18 Pearson, E. (2020). "Gendered Reflections? Extremism in the UK's Radical Right and al-Muhajiroun Networks," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 46(4): 489-512.

19 Ingram, K & K. Campion (2024). "Of Heroes and Mothers: Locating Gender in Ideological Narratives of Salafi-Jihadist and Extreme Right Propaganda," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2024.2322758>.

20 Kimmel, M. (2018). *Healing from Hate: How Young Men Get Into – and Out of – Violent Extremism*. Berkeley: University of California Press

21 Flood et al. (2020) Challenging the Use of Masculinity as a Recruitment Mechanism in Extremist Narratives. Geelong, VIC: Deakin University.

22 Rottweiler et al. (2025). "A common psychology of male violence? Assessing the effects of misogyny on intentions to engage in violent extremism, interpersonal violence, and support for violence against women," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 37(3): 287-312.

23 Johnston and True (2019). *Misogyny and violent extremism: Implications for preventing violent extremism*. UN Women.

24 Meger et al (2024).

25 Meger et al. (2024).

This project seeks to enhance the existing evidence base for the causal relationship between misogyny and ideological extremism, as well as the pathways to radicalisation, through a mixed-methods study focused on a cohort of Australians underrepresented in our data: youth. It also seeks to deepen our understanding of the ‘mixed ideologies’ of contemporary extremism in Australia by exploring the role of misogynistic and violent anti-feminist attitudes as a unifying feature of these ideologies.

In exploring this central question, this study asked the following sub-questions:

- What social and political attitudes are most predictive of support for various forms of extremism in Australia?
- What demographic factors (age, sex, location, education levels, income) are most predictive of support for various forms of extremism in Australia?
- Is misogyny a strong predictor of all forms of ideological extremism amongst Australian youth?
- How does the relationship between misogyny and ideological extremism in youth compare to that of older cohorts in Australia?
- What are the social and online contexts in which youth are exposed to misogynistic and extremist ideologies?
- What have been the impacts of exposure to misogynistic and extremist ideologies amongst Australian youth?

Research Methods

This report is based on the first stage of the research project, in which we conducted a nationwide survey of Australians aged 13 and above. Our adult sample (n=2307) was weighted to Australian Bureau of Statistics ratios for age, sex, and geographic location to ensure national representation. We oversampled our youth cohort (n=1122) to ensure a sufficient sample for comparisons between youth and adults.

The mean age of respondent in our youth sample was 14.7 years. The mean age of our adult sample was 47.3 years.

Overall, we surveyed:

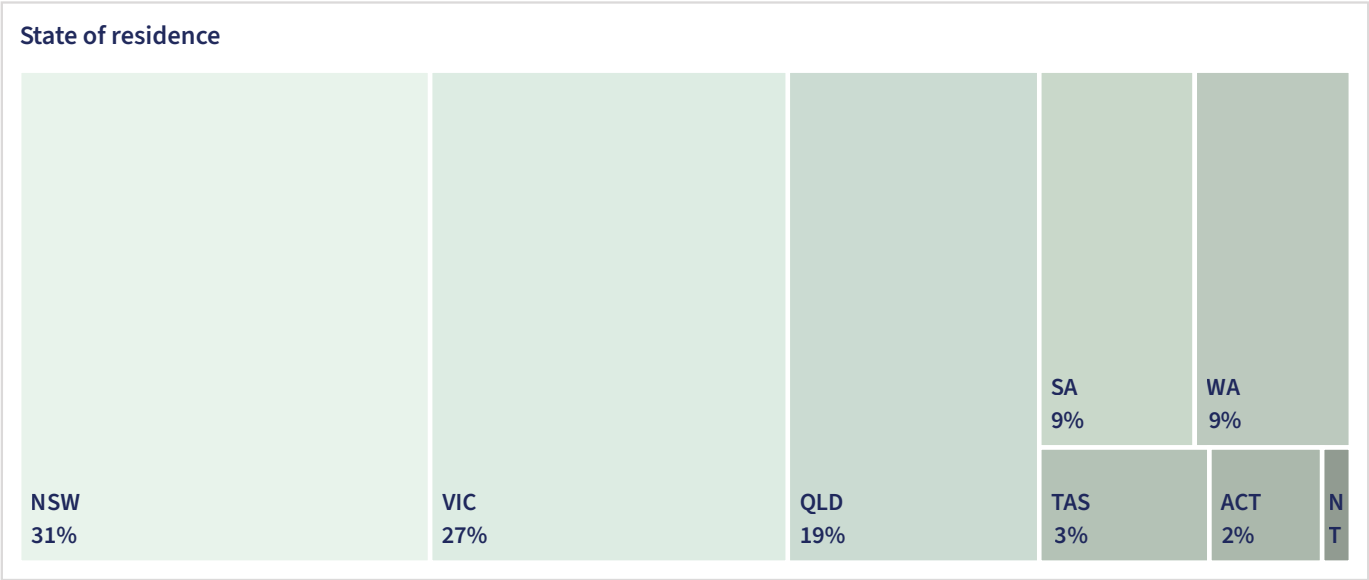
Youth (13-17)		Adults (18+)	
Boys	Girls	Men	Women
661	455	1097	1195

Our sample included 6 non-binary youth, 8 non-binary adults, and 7 further adults who preferred not to say or preferred to self-identify. However, due to their small sample size, individuals who identified other than girl/boy or man/woman were excluded from this analysis.

The breakdown of respondents by generation and sex was:

	Gen Z (13-29)	Millennial (30-45)	Gen X (46-61)	Boomer (62-80)	Silent Gen (81+)
Male	868	351	266	246	27
Female	669	332	403	229	17

Further demographic information was collected about respondents, including household income, postcode, religion, ethnicity, and education.



Ethnic background							
White	Aboriginal	Asian	Middle Eastern/ North African	Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black African	Other
76%	8%	13%	2%	2%	1%	<1%	3%

Religion				
Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	No Religion
43%	3%	2%	1%	45%

Participants were asked to complete an anonymous survey that asked about attitudes towards men and women, attitudes towards gender roles, attitudes about violence against women, attitudes about radicalisation and the use of violence for personal and political reasons, and a range of extremist political attitudes²⁶. Participants were also asked about their social media use, and online engagement with gaming, pornography, and dating apps.

The survey was administered through Qualtrics, who handled recruitment and remuneration of participants. All participants were informed of the purpose of the survey and asked to provide informed consent. Youth participants were recruited via their adult guardians, who gave consent on each youth’s behalf. Following adult consent for youth participation, youth participants were also asked to provide assent to participate. Recruitment for the adult and youth samples were conducted separately, ensuring that adult participants in the survey and the adult guardians of youth participants in the survey did not overlap.

Initial data cleaning was done by Qualtrics, who removed responses by potential duplicates and bots, as well as removing participants who completed the survey too quickly, those who ‘straight-lined’ the survey (gave the same answers to all the questions), and those who failed an attention check question.

This research was conducted by Dr. Sara Meger of the University of Melbourne for National Intelligence Postdoctoral Grant (project number NIPG202412) and funded by the Australian Government. It received human research ethics approval from the University of Melbourne (33458).

26 For full list of extremist attitudes questions, see Chapter 2.2: Extremist Attitudes.

Chapter 1:

Misogynistic Attitudes in Australia

For decades, attitudes in Australia had been shifting toward greater gender equality, marked by declining acceptance of rigid gender roles, of violence against women, and against the idea that men are better political leaders²⁷. From 2009 until 2021, there were measurable positive shifts in rejecting norms of gender inequality²⁸, while women's labour force participation reached record highs.

However, new studies are now indicating a reversal of some of this progress in terms of gender equality norms in Australia, particularly amongst younger generations²⁹. Social research has found an increasing proportion of Australians expressing beliefs that men have it harder than women, particularly amongst those 18-34 years old³⁰, and that feminism and gender equality has gone too far³¹.

Misogyny is understood in this research as attitudes and behaviours that visit hostile or adverse social consequences on women and girls to enforce and police gender norms. This conception of misogyny is developed from Kate Manne, who defines misogyny as "primarily a property of social environments in which women are liable to encounter hostility due to the enforcement and policing of patriarchal norms and expectations" and it functions "to enforce and police women's subordination and uphold male dominance, against the backdrop of other intersecting systems of oppression and vulnerability, dominance and disadvantage, as well as disparate material resources..."³². This understanding sees misogyny not just as a belief system, but as a regulatory system.

Misogyny thus has two key elements in our theorizing: attitudinal and behavioural. It manifests both in *beliefs* about women's inferiority as natural and requiring enforcement (sexist attitudes); and in *violence against women*, which serves as the enforcement mechanism for misogyny. In this understanding, violence against women is not an extreme outcome of pre-existing sexist beliefs, but is a constitutive function of misogyny. When women violate patriarchal expectations of gender roles, within misogynistic systems, they can expect punishment in the form of harassment, abuse, and violence, the withdrawal of protection or care, and reputational destruction. Physical, sexual, and psychological violence against women is where misogyny becomes active, and not merely cognitive.

Misogyny as a Training Ground for Extremism

Misogynistic violence is the practice through which hierarchical gender ideology is realised and reproduced – and this practice habituates individuals and societies to the use of coercion, making support for other forms of political violence to enforce hierarchy/order more likely.

Within the study of politics, Valerie Hudson (2020; Hudson et al. 2012) shows that societies with higher levels of violence against women are more prone to political instability, internal conflict, and extremism. Hudson conceptualises the regulation of women's bodies and autonomy as the "first political order" (2020), arguing that patterns of domination established in the private sphere extend into public and political domains. In this framework, violence against women is not a peripheral social issue but a foundational organising principle that shapes broader norms of authority, coercion, and legitimacy. Societies that tolerate or institutionalise such violence effectively normalise the use of force as a means of maintaining hierarchical order.

This implies that systems that legitimise control over women provide the cognitive and material template by which violence becomes legitimised as a way to enforce hierarchy, restore order, and punish deviance. The same logic of how misogyny enforces women's subordination can then be applied to other marginalised categories, including political enemies, racialized others, and out-groups defined by extremist ideologies.

Drawing on Manne's conceptualisation of misogyny as the enforcement arm of patriarchal order and Hudson's empirical findings linking violence against women to state instability, misogyny can be understood not simply as a belief system but as a patterned practice of coercion that normalises and legitimises violence as a tool of social regulation. This normalisation provides a critical pathway through which gendered domination scales into support for violent extremism.

27 ANROWS (2017). *National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey*. Sydney, NSW.

28 ANROWS (2021). *Attitudes Matter: The 2021 NCAS*. Sydney, NSW.

29 IPSOS (2026); Meger et al. (2024). Biddle et al. (2025). "The Gender Gap Revisited: Polarisation, Progress, and Party Politics in Contemporary Australia."

30 Biddle et al. (2025)

31 IPSOS (2025), Biddle et al. (2025).

32 Kate Manne (2018). *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Emerging research on extremist movements further supports this linkage. Scholars have identified misogyny as a common feature across a range of violent extremist ideologies, including far-right, religious fundamentalist, and incel-related movements. These ideologies frequently combine rigid gender hierarchies with narratives of grievance, entitlement, and restoration, in which violence is framed as a legitimate response to perceived injustice or disorder. A 2024 study using a two-wave panel survey found that exposure to sexist content on social media boosted contact with far-right content over time, and that the effect was amplified for those engaging in fringe online environments³³. This suggests that the relationship between misogyny and extremism is not merely correlational, but that misogynistic content consumption can precede and predict engagement with extremist content.

Within this context, misogyny can be understood as a “training ground” for extremist orientations. By legitimising domination and punitive control in intimate and social relationships, it fosters dispositions that are readily transferable to political contexts. Individuals socialised within such frameworks may be more likely to endorse authoritarianism, dehumanise out-groups, and support the use of violence to achieve ideological goals.

Anti-feminism and Extremist Ideologies

In our earlier study³⁴ with a nationally representative sample of Australian adults, we asked as an indicator of incel extremist ideology the question: “to what extent do you agree or disagree that feminism is damaging to our society and should be resisted with force if necessary?” Fourteen percent of all respondents agreed, with over 19 per cent of men agreeing. In fact, so high were the rates of agreement, relative to other questions on extremist attitudes, that our policy report concluded that, were anti-feminist violent ideologies to be classified as a form of violent extremist ideology in Australia, it would be the most prevalent form of extremism.

This finding challenges the conventional security framing that treats violent extremism primarily through the lens of religious or political ideological motivations, and suggests that gender-based violent extremism may be hiding in plain sight.

Given this, our current study included as a form of extremist attitude a measure of “Anti-Feminist Violent Extremism.” It also included questions regarding the perception of gender equality going too far, men now being discriminated against, and feminism being a ‘hate movement.’

These measures were included as a growing body of sociological research finds worrying trends in population-level attitudes of hostility towards feminism, particularly from men³⁵. Simultaneously, qualitative terrorism research finds that overt hostility towards feminism is a unifying feature of the ideologies of many forms of violent extremism³⁶. Yet, state security policies and countering and preventing violent extremism measures thus far largely exclude insights regarding the role of misogyny and anti-feminism as a driver of extremism³⁷. Including an analysis of anti-feminist ideology enables a view of wider phenomena beyond man/woman relations, but can shed light on how anti-feminism crystallises a form of in-group and out-group political ideology based on being *the right type of man or the right type of woman*. Anti-feminism and misogyny are thus related, but analytically distinct constructions. If misogyny is an enforcement mechanism of patriarchy³⁸, it is largely dispositional and affective, operating through contempt, dehumanisation, and the attribution of negative characteristics to women as a group. Anti-feminism, then, can be understood as the ideological justification for that enforcement. It is a set of explicit beliefs that feminism is wrong, excessive, illegitimate, or harmful, and that challenges to existing gender relations should be resisted. In this framing, misogyny provides the emotional and motivational substrate, while anti-feminism provides the intellectual scaffolding.

Anti-feminism is not coterminous with misogyny, as it performs specific functions that misogyny alone does not. Firstly, it provides the legitimacy for male grievance over existing gender relations or challenges to existing relations. Anti-feminism reframes misogyny as a reasonable political position, and allows misogynistic men to present themselves as victims of the overreach of feminism. More significantly, though, anti-feminism transforms individual misogynistic attitudes into a collective political identity. It provides shared political framing that creates community and provides a coherent, clear political enemy, channelling generalised grievance towards identifiable opponents: feminists.

Thus, our research sought to examine not only the role of misogynistic attitudes and attitudes permissive of violence against women on support for violent extremism in Australia, but also the role of anti-feminism as a driver of extremist sentiment.

33 Weiss, P., K. Koban & J. Matthes (2024). “A narrow gateway from misogyny to the far right: empirical evidence for social media exposure effects,” *Information, Communication & Society* 28(13): 2377-2395.

34 Meger et al. (2024).

35 IPSOS (2022); IPSOS (2025) International Women’s Day Survey. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/giwl/assets/iwd-2025-survey.pdf>; Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). *Empowered: Popular feminism and popular misogyny*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

36 Meiering, D., Dziri, A., & Foroutan, N. (2020). Connecting structures: Resistance, heroic masculinity and anti-feminism as bridging narratives within group radicalization. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 14(2), 1-19. doi: 10.4119/ijcv-3805; Spector, J. D. (2025). *Anti-feminism as a Forecasting Barometer for Political Radicalization: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations in partial requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Salve Regina University, Newport, RI; Roose et al. (2023). Anti-Women Attitudes and Extremism: Empirical Evidence from the Australian Context. Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS). Deakin University. Melbourne, Australia. <https://www.crisconsortium.org/antiwomen-attitudes-and-violent-extremism-1>

37 Agius, C., et al. (2021). “Anti-feminism, gender, and the far-right gap in C/PVE measures,” *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 15(3): 681-705.

38 Manne, K. (2018).

Chapter 2:

Attitudinal Survey Research Findings

Our survey asked 1122 young people and 2305 adults in Australian about their gender attitudes and about extremist ideologies.

Gender Attitudes

We used a number of indicators to measure both elements of misogyny as theorised by Manne. We used an adapted version of Rottweiler et al. (2025)’s misogyny scale to measure sexist beliefs and adapted scales from the ANROWS violence against women survey, as well as the Modern Adolescent Dating Violence Scale to measure attitudes towards the permissibility of violence against women.

Across the board, young Australians measured higher on all indicators of misogynistic gender attitudes.

Gendered Attitudes Frequencies by Age Cohort and Sex										
Attitude	13-17	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Male	Female	All
Misogyny	31.9%	21.0%	23.7%	24.2%	20.7%	16.6%	18.9%	31.1%	17.4%	24.4%
MADVA	17.6%	7.7%	11.8%	6.1%	1.9%	0.8%	0.4%	12.2%	6.0%	9.2%
Gender Roles	25.4%	16.8%	22.7%	12.8%	6.7%	7.3%	8.5%	23.2%	10.8%	16.9%
Aggrieved Sexism	30.0%	18.9%	24.6%	20.9%	16.0%	12.4%	18.5%	30.6%	13.9%	22.4%
Consent Beliefs	18.2%	9.6%	13.6%	6.5%	5.2%	3.1%	3.1%	14.2%	7.2%	10.8%
Traditional VAW	18.3%	10.7%	14.4%	5.6%	2.6%	0.8%	0.0%	13.1%	7.0%	10.1%
Mistrusting Women	30.4%	18.2%	26.7%	22.2%	20.5%	21.6%	29.1%	32.9%	16.7%	24.9%
Minimising VAW	23.4%	13.5%	18.1%	10.8%	8.6%	6.5%	12.0%	20.3%	10.5%	15.5%
Excusing Perpetrator	16.2%	11.0%	13.1%	7.0%	4.0%	1.1%	0.4%	12.9%	6.4%	9.7%

When categorised by generation³⁹ and disaggregated by sex, these are the results:

Agreement with Gender Attitudes by Generation and Sex								
	Gen Z Male	Gen Z Female	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	Gen X Male	Gen X Female	Boomer Male	Boomer Female
Misogyny	33.5%	22.0%	34.2%	14.2%	27.1%	14.9%	23.4%	13.4%
MADVA	18.1%	10.8%	14.2%	4.8%	1.9%	2.7%	1.1%	0.0%
Gender Roles	28.5%	16.5%	27.6%	11.4%	10.5%	5.5%	10.3%	3.7%
Aggrieved Sexism	33.2%	19.4%	34.9%	13.6%	25.2%	8.9%	22.3%	7.3%
Consent Beliefs	18.5%	12.4%	16.5%	4.8%	7.1%	3.2%	4.0%	2.8%
Traditional VAW	19.5%	12.3%	15.4%	6.0%	1.9%	3.5%	0.7%	0.0%
Mistrusting Women	32.8%	20.0%	37.6%	13.3%	29.3%	13.4%	30.8%	17.5%
Minimising VAW	25.1%	15.4%	22.5%	8.1%	11.3%	6.5%	11.0%	6.9%
Excusing Perpetrator	18.1%	10.8%	16.5%	4.8%	3.8%	4.0%	0.7%	0.8%

39 Due to their small sample size, Silent Generation results are excluded from generation results tables.

Gen Z encapsulated responses from both our 13-17 year old cohort and our 18-29 year old cohort. When disaggregated further, we see further intensification of misogynistic attitudes amongst younger Australians:

Agreement with Gender Attitudes, Adults vs Youth by Sex				
	13-17 Boys	13-17 Girls	18-29 Men	18-29 Women
Misogyny	34.8%	26.2%	29.5%	13.1%
MADVA	21.3%	12.1%	7.7%	7.9%
Gender Roles	30.3%	18.7%	22.7%	11.7%
Aggrieved Sexism	35.4%	22.6%	26.1%	12.6%
Consent Beliefs	20.3%	15.2%	13.0%	6.5%
Traditional VAW	21.6%	13.6%	12.6%	9.3%
Mistrusting Women	34.9%	24.2%	26.1%	11.2%
Minimising VAW	26.9%	18.7%	19.3%	8.4%
Excusing Perpetrator	19.2%	12.1%	14.5%	7.9%

By generation, we observe significantly higher rates of agreement with these sentiments amongst younger cohorts. When disaggregated by sex, we can see that some forms of misogynistic attitudes are consistent across generations of men up to a certain age.

Each of the scales were subjected to exploratory factor analysis and showed strong factor cohesion. Nonetheless, examples of some of the individual questions help to exemplify how extreme misogynistic and problematic gender attitudes can be. Below, this report details examples of questions included in the misogyny scale, the VAW scales, gender role adherence scale, and specific items from other scales relating to issues of consent and views about feminism.

Misogynistic Attitudes

In the misogyny scale, we asked respondents to indicate on a 7-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the following sentiments:

Misogyny Q2: “Women use their sexuality to manipulate men.”

Misogyny Q8: “Sometimes women bother me just by being around.”

Misogyny Q9: “A lot of society’s problems are the result of children raised by single mothers.”

Agreement with Specific Hostile Gender Attitude Statements by Generation and Sex								
	Gen Z Male	Gen Z Female	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	Gen X Male	Gen X Female	Boomer Male	Boomer Female
Misogyny 9	26.2%	18.7%	27.9%	13.3%	19.2%	9.2%	21.2%	11.0%
Misogyny 8	23.3%	16.6%	20.2%	13.0%	10.5%	12.9%	7.3%	12.7%
Misogyny 2	37.9%	22.4%	38.5%	18.1%	37.6%	20.6%	39.4%	26.2%
Legitimacy 1	31.1%	23.6%	34.5%	13.0%	30.5%	12.7%	31.3%	17.9%
Madva 1	15.3%	7.8%	14.2%	3.9%	2.3%	0.7%	2.8%	0.4%
Madva 2	16.2%	9.0%	11.1%	3.9%	1.9%	2.5%	1.6%	0.4%
Madva 4	16.1%	7.8%	13.1%	4.2%	2.6%	2.5%	2.0%	0.0%
Madva 12	16.8%	10.6%	14.8%	5.4%	1.9%	3.2%	0.4%	0.0%
GRA 1	27.5%	17.2%	27.6%	11.7%	9.8%	7.9%	6.9%	3.5%
GRA 2	24.3%	16.0%	23.4%	11.1%	8.3%	5.5%	11.8%	4.8%
GRA 4	22.6%	14.2%	22.2%	8.1%	8.3%	5.0%	8.1%	5.7%
Consent 2	17.1%	12.9%	17.7%	6.3%	4.9%	3.0%	3.3%	2.6%
ASQ16	27.6%	17.3%	29.1%	13.6%	27.1%	12.2%	24.4%	13.1%
Anti-fem VE	23.3%	16.1%	18.8%	10.2%	13.5%	8.4%	11.4%	6.6%

Across the cohort, a large minority of Australian men and boys believe that women use sexuality to manipulate men (38-39%). We see starker differences by generation, however, with regards to our other misogyny variables. More Gen Z and Millennial males agree that “women bother me just by being around” and that “a lot of society’s problems are the result of children raised by single mothers.”

Traditional Gender Roles

The Gender Role Adherence scale measured the extent to which respondents hold ‘traditional’ attitudes towards gender roles. Also on a 7-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

GRA Q1. “The husband is the head of the household and the wife should be obedient to him.”

GRA Q2. “A woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled.”

GRA Q4. “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.”

Again, a consistent pattern of higher rates of agreement with traditional gender roles is registered amongst Gen Z and Millennials than Gen X and Boomers. **Gen Z males are approximately 4x more likely to agree that a husband is the head of the household and his wife should be obedient than are Boomer males.** The difference is starker amongst female respondents: Gen Z female respondents were nearly 5x more likely to agree than Boomer women.

Gen Z males are approximately 4x more likely to agree that a husband is the head of the household and his wife should be obedient than are Boomer males.

Consent Attitudes

As part of the ANROWS measures on attitudes towards violence against women, respondents were asked about their beliefs around consent. An indicative question asked to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed that:

Consent Q2. “The marriage contract generally entitles a husband to have sexual relations with his wife, even if she does not want to.”

Similarly, the Modern Adolescent Dating Violence Attitudes Scale (MADVA) asked respondents several questions regarding consent, including:

MADVA Q1. “In a relationship, a girl should give the guy what he wants sexually, even if she doesn’t feel like it at the time.”

MADVA Q2. “It’s okay for guys to pressure their girlfriends into doing sexual things, that’s just how it works these days.”

MADVA Q4. “It’s okay for a guy to make a girl do certain sexual things, even if she’s acting shy or like she might not want to.”

Across these measures, we see a pattern of Gen Z and Millennial males being much more likely than their Gen X and Boomer counterparts to agree to ideas of male sexual entitlement. Worryingly, **Gen Z females were twice as likely as Millennial females and 4x as likely as Gen X females to agree that marriage entitles a husband to sexual intercourse with his wife.**

Gen Z females were twice as likely as Millennial females and 4x as likely as Gen X females to agree that marriage entitles a husband to sexual intercourse with his wife.

Anti-Feminist Attitudes

We asked further questions from different scale items about attitudes towards feminism. As various international surveys have indicated a growing sentiment that ‘feminism has gone too far’, our survey asked questions about attitudes towards feminism, including:

Legitimacy Q1. “Attempts to give equal opportunities to women in Australia have gone too far.”

ASQ Q16. “Feminism is a hate movement.”

Anti-fem VE1: “Feminism is damaging to our society and should resisted with violence if necessary.”

Across the generations, a large minority of Australian men and boys share a belief that gender equality has gone too far, with 31-35% of boys and men expressing agreement with that question and 24-29% agreeing that “feminism is a hate movement.” Over 30% of Gen Z males agree that gender equality measures have gone too far in Australia, while 28% agree that “feminism is a hate movement.” However, when asked about the legitimacy of violence to resist feminism, younger males were the most likely to agree, with **23% of Gen Z males believing that feminism should be resisted with violence.**

23%

of Gen Z males believe that feminism should be resisted with violence.

Extremist Attitudes

To measure attitudes supportive of violent extremism, we used both validated psychological scales of Radical Intentions, Radical Violence Sympathies, and Violent Intentions, and novel scales to measure explicit political attitudes salient in the Australian context. These we categorise as:

Extremist Attitudes Scales	
Scale	Questions
Religious VE	1. My religious beliefs are under attack and therefore it is ok to use violence against those who threaten my religious group and beliefs. 2. Violence is justified to realise God's vision on earth for proper religious order for society. 3. While it is okay for some people to have a different religion, there are people who claim to follow my religion whose beliefs are incorrect. It is okay to use violence against those sects because they are corrupting our beliefs and our religious community.
White Supremacist VE	1. Foreigners and ethnic minorities are ruining our country. The government won't do anything about it, and so we have to take matters into our own hands, even if it means using violence. 2. Society demonises whiteness today, so violent resistance is the only way for white people to have a fair chance in the world 3. We should make sure we keep Australia pure and prevent races mixing.
Economic Reactionary VE	1. Private property is a fundamental right, and I have a right to defend my property with violence if necessary. 2. The tax system unfairly takes my money and gives it to lazy people who don't want to work. I support those who use violent resistance to try to bring about a more just system that doesn't support freeloaders.
Left-Wing VE	1. The rich will not give up their wealth easily. Organised violence, including against people, is the only way to make things fair for everyone. 2. Capitalism is ruining the world and should be resisted with violence.
Incel VE	1. It is understandable that young men who are rejected by women and starved of sex would resort to violent revenge. 2. When women have the freedom to choose which men to mate with, they breed with stupid, degenerate men, which produces stupid, degenerate offspring. Women should not have the right to choose who to mate with. That choice should be made for them by civilized men of intelligence.
Anti-Feminist VE	1. Feminism is damaging to our society and should resisted with violence if necessary 2. Our government is full of weak men who have allowed feminism to go too far. This is why we must take matters into our own hands to stop the spread of feminism and gender ideology.

Exploratory factor analysis found high alpha scores for each of these scales, except the Economic Reactionary VE scale. Because so many more individual respondents agreed with the first question in this scale than the second, this item was excluded from the analysis of overall rates of agreement with extremist attitudes and the correlations of gender attitudes and extremist attitudes in the analysis that follows.

We also included three scales that are commonly used in psychological studies of radicalisation and extremism to gauge violent and radicalisation *intent*. These are the Radical Intentions Scale (RIS), a 4-item Likert measure designed by Moskalenko and McCauley to assess willingness to support or participate in violent actions for a group’s cause⁴⁰; the Sympathy for Violent Radicalization Scale (SyfoR), a measure developed by Bhui et al. to ask about sympathies for different actions that fall within a range of behaviours engaged in by extremists⁴¹; and, the Violent Intention Scale (VIS) adapted from Funk et al.’s Attitudes Towards Violence Scale with reference to Doosje et al.’s Own Violent Intentions subscale⁴².

Agreement with Extremist and Violent Attitudes								
	Gen Z Male	Gen Z Female	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	Gen X Male	Gen X Female	Boomer Male	Boomer Female
Religious VE	17.6%	12.7%	14.0%	6.6%	2.6%	2.0%	1.5%	0.8%
White Supremacist VE	25.2%	16.3%	22.5%	9.9%	14.7%	7.2%	10.6%	7.7%
Left-Wing VE	24.2%	18.8%	20.2%	10.8%	9.8%	6.7%	5.5%	4.1%
Right-Wing VE	24.1%	18.1%	22.2%	15.1%	16.9%	10.9%	13.9%	6.9%
Incel VE	21.2%	13.5%	18.5%	9.0%	4.9%	5.5%	4.0%	2.0%
Anti-Feminist VE	23.3%	16.1%	18.8%	10.2%	13.5%	8.4%	11.4%	6.6%
Radical Intentions	21.5%	16.9%	19.4%	9.9%	9.0%	6.0%	3.7%	0.8%
Radical Violence Sympathies	14.9%	10.2%	12.3%	3.6%	1.9%	2.7%	1.2%	0.4%
Violent Intentions	13.9%	10.3%	12.3%	3.3%	2.2%	2.2%	0.4%	0.0%

Similar to our findings on measuring gender attitudes, we see a pattern of higher likelihood to agree with all forms of extremist attitudes amongst the younger generations, and a higher likelihood of male respondents of Gen Z and Millennial generations agreeing with extremist attitudes than female respondents. We see a sharp decline in these attitudes amongst female respondents between Gen Zs and Millennials, but similar rates of extremist attitudes between Gen Z and Millennial males.

40 Moskalenko, S. & C. McCauley (2009). "Measuring Political Mobilization: The Distinction Between Activism and Radicalism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21(2): 239-260.

41 Bhui I K., Warfa N., and E. Jones (2014). "Is violent radicalisation associated with poverty, migration, poor self-reported health and common mental disorders?" *PLoS ONE* 9, e90718.

42 Funk, J. B. et al. (1999). "The Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for Adolescents," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 14(11): 1123-1136; Doosje, B., Loseman, A. & K. Bos (2013). "Determinants of radicalization of Islamic youth in the Netherlands: Personal uncertainty, perceived injustice, and perceived group threat," *Journal of Social Issues* 69(3): 586-604.

Gender Attitudes and Extremist Attitudes by Age Cohort

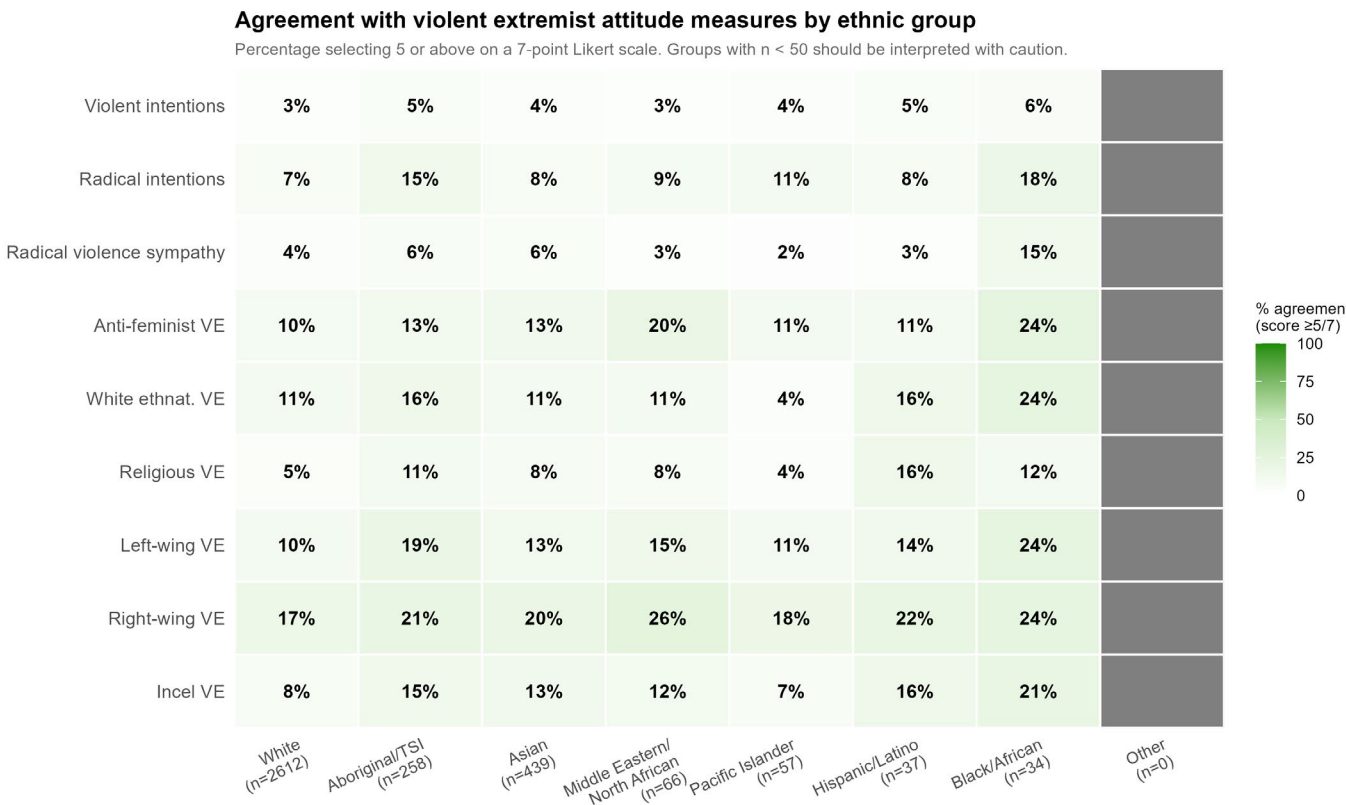
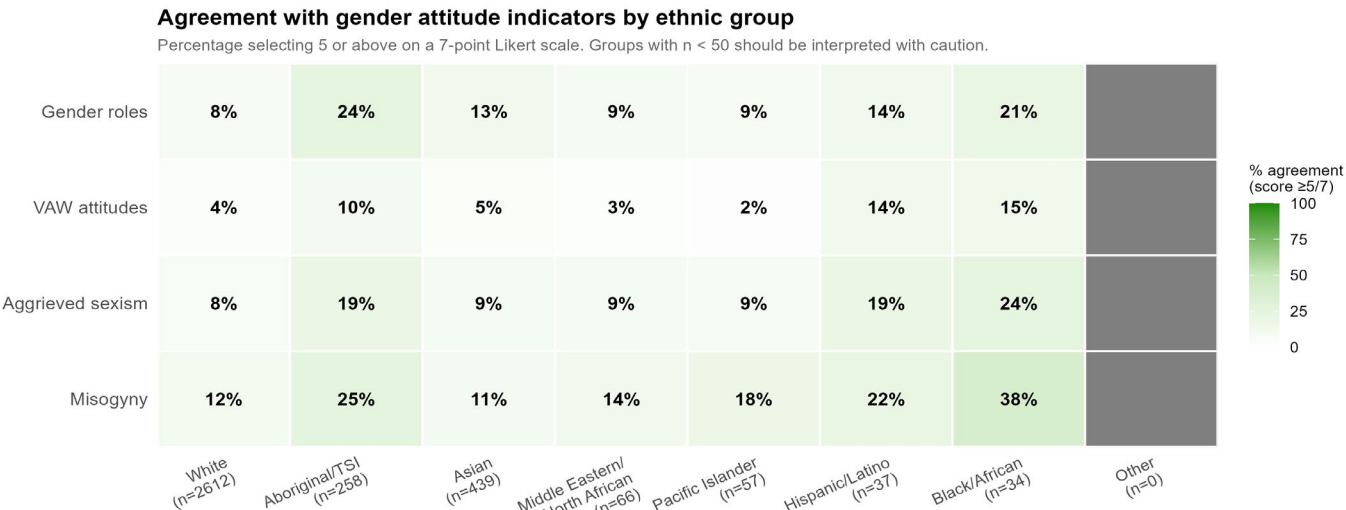
Rates of Agreement With Gender and Political Attitudes, Youth and Adults				
	13-17 Boys	13-17 Girls	Adult Men	Adult Women
Misogyny	34.8%	26.2%	28.9%	14.1%
MADVA (domestic violence)	21.3%	12.1%	6.7%	3.7%
Gender Roles	30.3%	18.7%	19.3%	8.4%
Aggrieved Sexism	35.4%	23.0%	27.7%	10.5%
Consent Beliefs	20.3%	15.2%	10.5%	4.2%
Traditional VAW	21.6%	13.6%	7.9%	4.5%
Mistrusting Women	34.9%	24.2%	31.7%	13.8%
Minimising VAW	26.9%	18.7%	16.3%	7.4%
Excusing Perpetrator	19.2%	12.1%	9.1%	4.3%
Right-Wing VE*	26.3%	21.1%	18.3%	11.5%
Left-Wing VE	25.0%	19.6%	14.4%	9.4%
Religious VE	19.1%	13.6%	7.9%	4.6%
White Supremacist VE	27.1%	18.5%	17.3%	9.0%
Incel VE	22.5%	15.4%	11.4%	6.5%
Anti-Feminist VE	25.1%	18.9%	15.5%	9.0%
Radical Intentions	22.2%	15.4%	12.9%	8.4%
Violent Intentions	15.6%	12%	6.2%	3.0%
Radical Violence Sympathies	17.2%	10.8%	6.0%	3.6%

Because our “Gen Z” group comprises both adolescent and adult respondents, we can further disaggregate the responses by survey cohort to see the differences in rates of agreement between youth and adults, by gender. Doing so allows us to see the concentration of concerning attitudes, both gendered and extremist, amongst young Australians, with boys the most likely to express agreement across our attitudinal measures. Girls showed an interesting pattern of similar rates of agreement across both gendered and extremist attitudes as with adult men. It is the adult women cohort least likely to express agreement with either extremist or gendered attitudes.

Gender Attitudes and Extremist Attitudes by Other Demographic Variables

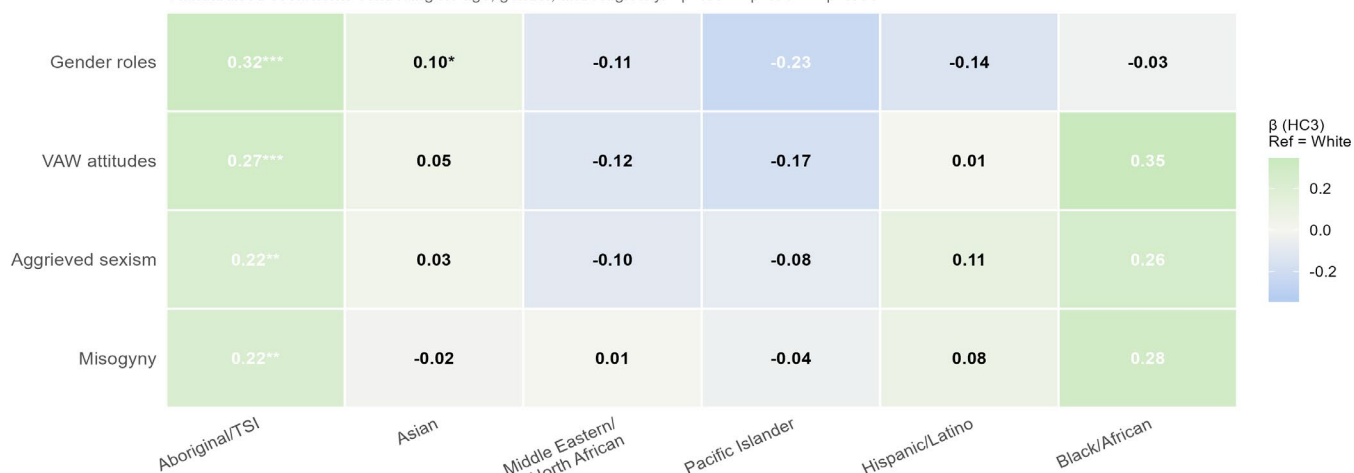
Frequently, lay discourse in Australia attributes problematic gender and extremist attitudes to demographic factors such as ethnicity or religion (see Qualitative Data on Gender and Extremist Attitudes). To test this hypothesis, we disaggregated frequencies of agreement with our gender attitudes measures and our extremism measures, before also running correlation analyses and multivariate regression analyses.

Agreement scores were determined by the selection of 5 or above on a 7-point Likert scale.



Ethnic group differences in gender attitudes (OLS regression, ref = White)

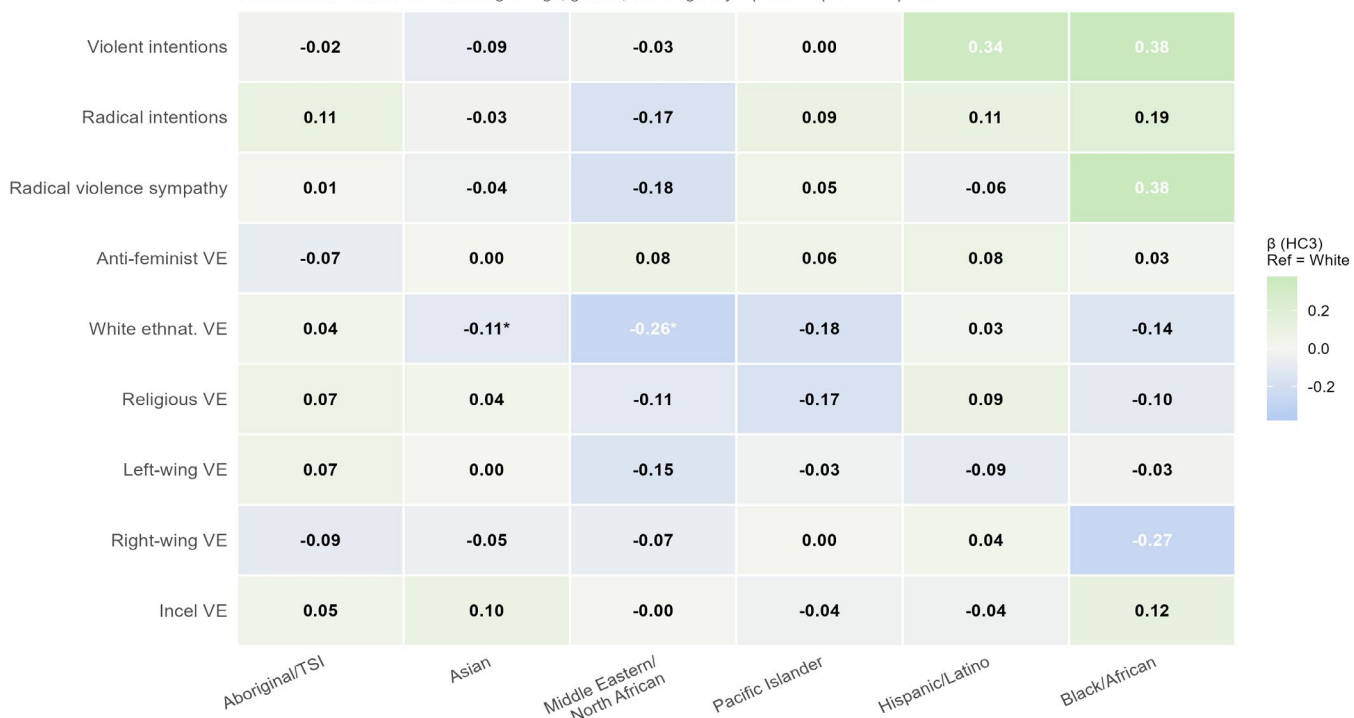
Standardised coefficients controlling for age, gender, and religiosity. * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001



Source: Meger (2025). Misogyny and Youth Radicalisation in Australia (n = 3,429).

Ethnic group differences in violent extremist attitudes (OLS regression, ref = White)

Standardised coefficients controlling for age, gender, and religiosity. * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001



Source: Meger (2025). Misogyny and Youth Radicalisation in Australia (n = 3,429).

Caution must be exercised, however, when interpreting differences between ethnic groups in our sample, as the data subsets vastly differ in number. Overall, our respondent numbers by ethnic group were:

White	Aboriginal/ Torres Straight Islander	Hispanic/ Latino/ Spanish	Pacific Islander	Black/ African	Asian	Middle Eastern/ North African	Other
2612	258	37	57	34	439	66	94

Given this, in the analysis below, we test whether our gender attitudes variables are predictive of support for different types of violent extremism, and whether this relationship holds even when controlling for differences in ethnicity and religion.

Misogyny as Predictive of Extremist Attitudes

To test the relationship between misogynistic attitudes and extremist attitudes, Spearman’s Rank correlation was conducted. Spearman’s Rank is the preferred method for analysing relationships involving non-normally distributed data, extreme outliers, and monotonic relationships, as it evaluates relationships where variables move in the same direction, though not necessarily at the same rate, such as attitudinal responses. All correlations were statistically significant at $p < .001$. The results revealed a consistent and robust pattern of positive associations between misogynistic attitudes and multiple forms of extremist sentiment.

Gender Attitudes, Behaviours, and Their Relationship with Violent Extremism							
	Incel VE	Anti-Feminist VE	Right-wing VE	Left-wing VE	Religious VE	White Supremacist VE	All VE (combined)
Misogyny	.51***	.62***	.53***	.39***	.42***	.54***	.61***
Dating Violence Attitudes	.61***	.59***	.44***	.52***	.62***	.55***	.62***
Aggrieved Sexism	.55***	.66***	.55***	.41***	.47***	.57***	.65***
Gender Roles	.57***	.62***	.44***	.44***	.54***	.54***	.60***
Manfluencer Engagement	.41***	.32***	.17***	.33***	.43***	.32***	.35***
Pornography Use	.30***	.27***	.23***	.30***	.31***	.23***	.30***
Online Dating	.42***	.34***	.22***	.36***	.43***	.32***	.36***

The strongest correlation was observed between misogyny and anti-feminist violent extremist attitudes ($p = .62$), followed by white supremacist ($p = .54$), economic reactionary ($p = .53$), and incel ideology ($p = .51$). Moderate-to-strong correlations were also found with religious extremism ($p = .42$) and left-wing extremism ($p = .39$).

The correlations between misogyny and extremist attitudes represent strong findings in this study, with several effect sizes reaching levels rarely observed in attitudinal research of this kind. Collectively, these results suggest that misogyny is not an isolated prejudice, but functions as a crosscutting ideological orientation that co-occurs with a remarkably broad spectrum of extremist positions.

The strongest association was with anti-feminist extremist attitudes ($p = .61$), which is theoretically expected — misogyny and anti-feminism share considerable ideological overlap. More striking, however, is the strength of the correlations with white supremacy ($p = .54$) and economic reactionary attitudes ($p = .53$). These findings are consistent with an emerging body of scholarship that argues that misogyny functions as a gateway or “entry point” into broader far-right ideological frameworks, with gender grievance providing an accessible on-ramp to racialised and economically reactionary worldviews.

The correlation with incel ideology ($p = .51$) is similarly theoretically coherent and consistent with research positioning incel communities as an extreme manifestation of misogynistic entitlement⁴³. The moderate but significant correlation with religious extremism ($p = .42$) suggests that patriarchal religious conservatism and secular misogyny share meaningful attitudinal ground. This is also unsurprising, given the recent phenomenon of Manosphere figures, once vehement Islamophobes, converting to Islam, such as Andrew Tate in 2022⁴⁴, who has praised Islam as a solution to contemporary men’s problems⁴⁵. Julia Ebner’s work has also highlighted the convergence of far-right and Islamist extremist ideology specifically on the issue of women’s rights⁴⁶.

The correlation with left-wing extremism ($p = .39$), while the weakest in this set, is also theoretically interesting and warrants careful interpretation. Rather than suggesting misogynists are drawn to left-wing politics, this finding likely reflects a generalised extremism disposition — individuals high in misogyny may score higher across *all* extremist measures, suggesting that misogyny is associated with a generalised rejection of mainstream social norms rather than alignment with any specific ideological tradition.

Amongst some forms of extremisms, attitudes permissive of violence against women (VAW) had even stronger correlations than our misogyny measures. The correlations were highest with incel extremism ($p = 0.61$) and religious violent extremism ($p = 0.62$).

We also included in our questions the Aggrieved Sexism Questionnaire (ASQ), an instrument designed to measure sexist attitudes with a view to the influence of misogynistic online content on the formation of these attitudes⁴⁷. ASQ showed similarly strong correlations with all forms of extremist ideology, and was highest with, Anti-Feminist VE ($p = .66$), white supremacist VE ($p = .57$), and incel VE and economic reactionary VE ($p = .55$).

We also found moderate, but still significant, correlations between gendered online behaviours and support for extremism. These will be discussed in more detail below.

When using the combined “All VE” measure, all four of our gender attitudes scales (misogyny, dating violence attitudes, aggrieved sexism, and gender roles) show very high effect sizes above $p = 0.61$.

Taken together, these findings make a compelling empirical case that **misogynistic attitudes, attitudes permissive of VAW, and attitudes hostile to gender equality occupy a central position within a broader constellation of extremist attitudes**. This has significant implications for radicalisation research and prevention, suggesting that **interventions targeting gender-based prejudice may have downstream effects on susceptibility to a range of extremist ideologies**.

Misogynistic attitudes, attitudes permissive of VAW, and attitudes hostile to gender equality occupy a central position within a broader constellation of extremist attitudes.

43 Zimmerman, S. (2022). “The Ideology of Incels: Misogyny and Victimhood as Justification for Political Violence,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 36(2): 166-179; Halpin, M. et al (2023) “Men who hate women: The misogyny of involuntarily celibate men,” *New Media Soc.* 27(1): 424-422; Aiolfi, I. et al. (20224) “The incel phenomenon: A systematic scoping review,” *Current Psychology* 42: 26264-26278.

44 Al Aqeedi, R. (2023) “Andrew Tate and the Moral Bankruptcy of Muslim Proselytization,” *New Lines Magazine*. 26 January. <https://newlinesmag.com/argument/andrew-tate-and-the-moral-bankruptcy-of-muslim-proselytization/>

45 “Christian Kickboxing Champion Praises Islam – Andrew Tate,” *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UJe6RVY0jg>

46 Ebner (2017).

47 Franklin-Paddock, B. et al. (2025) “The Aggrieved Sexism Questionnaire: Development and Validation of a Grievance-Based Anti-Women Ideology,” pre-print https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/z6mnh_v1

Controlling for Ethnicity and Religion

Given the prominence of public attitudes attributing misogyny and extremism to ethnic and religious minority groups in Australia, we sought to analyse whether the relationships between our gender attitudes and extremism attitudes remained robust when controlling for ethnicity and religiosity.

Religion and religiosity were measured with three variables in our survey:

Religion	Single categorical variable
Personal Religiosity	“How religious do you consider yourself to be?” Numeric variable, self-reported 10-point likert scale from “Not at all” to “Very religious”
Political Religiosity	2-item scale: 1. “It is very important for society to be connected through a religious community.” 2. “It is always better to trust the judgment of the religious authorities than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in society who are trying to create doubt.” Numeric variable, self-reported 7-point likert scale from “Not at all” to “Very religious”

Personal Religiosity and Politico-Religiosity Rates by Religion		
Religion	Personal Religiosity >= 6	Politico-Religiosity >=5
No Religion	8.3%	6.1%
Catholic	61.3%	40%
Anglican	48.6%	25.5%
Other	65.8%	34.2%
Islam	80.5%	64.6%
Uniting Church	71%	39%
Baptist	78.2%	47.4%
Hindu	78.9%	50.9%
Presbyterian	64.7%	41.2%
Buddhist	42.9%	28.6%
Greek Orthodox	50%	39.1%

When the demographic variables of ethnicity, religion, personal religiosity, and politico-religiosity were included in a multivariate correlation analysis, the overall pattern is that the relationships between gender attitudes and extremist attitudes are robust to ethnic and religious controls. Across the board, the relationships were moderated by ethnicity and religion, but to small degrees.

Outcome	Average Reduction	Interpretation
Religious VE	-0.082 to -.129	Largest reductions – religion/ ethnicity explains more of the variance in this form of extremist attitude than others.
Left-wing VE	-0.044 to -0.057	Moderate reductions
Incel VE	-0.057 to -0.092	Moderate reductions
Economic Reactionary VE	-0.020 to -0.034	Smallest reductions – most independent of ethnicity/ religion
Radical violence sympathy	-0.028 to -0.041	Small reductions
Violent Intentions	-0.047 to -0.077	Small-moderate reductions

Results indicated that all gender attitude–extremism associations remained large and statistically significant (all $p < .001$) after controls were applied, with partial correlations typically only marginally smaller than bivariate correlations (mean reduction across all pairs = approximately $-.05$). This pattern held across all nine extremist attitude outcomes and all nine gender attitude predictors, confirming that **the gender attitude–extremism relationship is not explained by ethnic or religious background**. Rather, it remains an independent and robust association. The larger noted reductions for religious violent extremism make sense, especially as religious affiliation and religiosity are more directly relevant to this outcome. Yet, the fact that, even for religious violent extremism, the correlations between our gender attitudes and this form of extremist attitude remain very strong (eg. MADVA $p = .54$, traditional VAW $p = .41$) is notable. This tells us that, even when *apparently ethnicity or religion forms the ideological basis for the extremism, misogynistic attitudes and attitudes supportive of violence against women remain the strongest predictors of support for these forms of violent extremism*.

The gender attitude–extremism relationship is not explained by ethnic or religious background.

Chapter 3:

Online Influences on Misogyny and Extremism in Australia

While sexist and misogynistic attitudes have long persisted in Australia, online influences – particularly the ‘manosphere’ – have been amplifying these attitudes by advocating for men and boys to disrespect women and girls and glorifying and minimising violence against women⁴⁸. The United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Centre (NTAC) has acknowledged that “those who subscribe to extreme misogynistic belief systems often communicate about, promote, and consume these views across various online communities” and found links with mass violence attackers, online misogynistic content, and online and offline violence against women⁴⁹.

Gendered beliefs about ‘natural’ roles for men and women and about men’s natural superiority to women are rife within the manosphere, as is the belief that gender equality has gone too far and that men and boys are now victimised by feminism as a movement⁵⁰. This group of beliefs – referred to as the ‘red pill’ – draws selectively on evolutionary psychology to claim that perceived differences in the sexes are natural and essential to social functioning⁵¹. Research has found that, rather than seeking out and actively engaging with red pill content, individuals become radicalised by this ideology and immerse themselves relatively quickly further into the manosphere⁵².

Aside from the manosphere, the other key influence that policymakers and scholarship has pointed to as having a significant role in radicalizing youth is online video gaming⁵³. Since 2020, the European Union and Europol have expressed concerns that video games and their associated platforms (e.g. Twitch and Discord) can be used by extremist groups to disseminate propaganda for radicalisation and recruitment⁵⁴. The report of the Australian Senate Committee inquiry into Right-Wing Extremist Movements in Australia contains a section on “Extremist activity on gaming platforms,” outlining concerns raised in the Inquiry that video games and gaming culture have “become arenas for radicalisation, particularly for young people.”

A former white supremacist who submitted to the Inquiry claimed that video games are used by extremists to target marginalised youth, while Home Affairs submitted that online gaming platforms are being used “to radicalise and recruit an increasingly younger cohort of internet users”⁵⁵. These sentiments were echoed by the Australian Federal Police, which stated in a 2023 press release that “some of these extremists are building and releasing games that are really just a trojan horse to promote their world view, blurring the reality of young users with the aim to radicalise them”⁵⁶.

Given the concerns of online for and online influences on radicalisation, especially amongst youth, we asked respondents about the frequency of their engagement with various forms of online content, including: social media, ‘manfluencers’ and ‘femfluencers’ (i.e., online influencers focusing on gendered content)⁵⁷, online gaming, online dating, live streaming, and online pornography.

48 Pfitzner et al. (2026). *An Introductory Guide to the Manosphere and the Impacts for Young People, Teachers and Schools*. ANROWS Insights 01/2026. ANROWS. <https://doi.org/10.71940/1h2k-x058>

49 US Secret Service NTAC. “Mass Attacks in Public Spaces 2016-2020,” p. 29-30.

50 Pfitzner et al. (2026).

51 Botto and Gottzen (2024). “Swallowing and spitting out the red pill: young men, vulnerability, and radicalization pathways in the manosphere,” *Journal of Gender Studies* 33(5): 596-608.

52 Ibid.

53 Schlegel, L. & R. Kowert (eds.) (2024). *Gaming and extremism: the radicalization of digital playgrounds*. New York: Routledge; Bhatt, S. & J. Mantua (2023)

54 EU (2020). “Online gaming in the context of the fight against terrorism”. EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Council of the European Union. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9066-2020-INIT/en/pdf>; Europol (2021), ‘European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2021 (TESAT).

55 Parliament of Australia (2024). *Right wing extremist movements in Australia*. Report, December 2024. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/RWExtremists23/Report

56 AFP (2023). “Holiday season warning: Extremists infiltrating online and gaming platforms to recruit young Australians,” Media release. 3 December 2023. <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/holiday-season-warning-extremists-infiltrating-online-and-gaming>.

57 In the sample, only men/boys were asked about engagement with ‘manfluencers’ while only women/girls were asked about engagement with ‘femfluencers’.

Respondents to our survey disclosed the following about their online engagement:

Frequency of Engagement with Online Media Sources											
	Media Type	Never	Once a month	Several times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Once a day	Several times a day	Once an hour	Several times an hour	All the time
Boys	Pornography	55.5%	7.4%	7.6%	4.5%	10.1%	3.8%	3.6%	1.7%	3.0%	2.7%
	Online Dating	65.4%	4.4%	3.9%	4.8%	5.0%	3.9%	4.8%	2.3%	2.7%	2.6%
	Online Gaming	5.0%	3.5%	7.0%	9.1%	21.6%	16.9%	18.8%	3.5%	5.7%	8.9%
	Live Streaming	17.1%	5.4%	8.8%	10.3%	18.8%	13.5%	13.3%	4.1%	5.4%	3.3%
	Online Forums	16.2%	6.4%	8.9%	10.0%	19.4%	9.5%	16.3%	4.5%	3.8%	5.0%
	Social Media	4.5%	2.7%	4.7%	6.1%	15.0%	13.2%	31.5%	5.3%	7.3%	9.8%
Men	Pornography	47.6%	11.9%	9.1%	7.8%	12.1%	5.0%	2.4%	1.5%	0.8%	1.7%
	Online Dating	72.2%	4.6%	4.2%	2.9%	4.5%	2.6%	3.7%	1.8%	1.4%	2.0%
	Online Gaming	41.3%	7.2%	6.8%	6.7%	13.2%	8.8%	8.2%	2.5%	2.8%	2.5%
	Live Streaming	45.7%	7.1%	4.7%	5.9%	12.7%	7.9%	7.6%	2.6%	2.9%	2.7%
	Online Forums	29.7%	11.2%	7.0%	7.7%	16.0%	9.3%	10.3%	2.9%	2.8%	3.0%
	Social Media	10.8%	2.2%	3.8%	4.1%	13.8%	15.1%	32.4%	4.1%	5.3%	8.4%
Girls	Pornography	76.5%	5.7%	4.2%	2.6%	4.4%	2.4%	2.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.7%
	Online Dating	76.3%	2.9%	4.0%	4.4%	4.0%	2.2%	4.0%	1.3%	0.9%	0.2%
	Online Gaming	13.2%	8.6%	9.2%	12.5%	23.1%	13.2%	11.2%	2.2%	2.0%	4.8%
	Live Streaming	23.3%	5.1%	8.1%	9.9%	18.7%	12.7%	11.9%	3.7%	3.3%	3.3%
	Online Forums	19.8%	7.9%	10.3%	9.9%	21.1%	8.4%	13.0%	3.1%	2.9%	3.7%
	Social Media	4.0%	1.3%	4.6%	4.6%	16.5%	13.2%	33.0%	3.7%	8.4%	10.8%
Women	Pornography	81.3%	8.4%	3.4%	1.8%	2.1%	1.3%	1.1%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%
	Online Dating	87.4%	2.8%	2.3%	1.3%	1.9%	1.3%	2.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
	Online Gaming	55.1%	8.5%	5.8%	4.6%	9.3%	6.4%	5.8%	1.5%	1.3%	1.8%
	Live Streaming	59.4%	6.8%	4.7%	4.9%	7.9%	6.7%	4.8%	1.4%	1.5%	1.9%
	Online Forums	37.2%	12.6%	8.4%	8.1%	12.6%	7.1%	8.5%	1.0%	1.5%	2.9%
	Social Media	7.9%	3.3%	4.0%	4.4%	11.5%	16.9%	33.6%	3.6%	5.1%	9.7%

The percentage of respondents who report engaging with each of these online influences at least once per day were:

% Who Engage At Least Once Per Day				
	Boys	Girls	Men	Women
Social Media	54%	56%	50%	52%
Online Gaming	37%	20%	16%	10%
Live Streaming	26%	22%	16%	10%
Online Forums	30%	23%	19%	14%
Online Dating	12%	6%	9%	3%
Online Pornography	11%	4%	6%	2%

We further asked respondents about their engagement with gendered online influencers. The men and boys were asked “How regularly do you watch content featuring influencers whose content focuses on masculinity, wealth, fitness, discipline, self-improvement and relationships?” The women and girls were asked, “How regularly do you watch online content featuring influencers whose content focuses on femininity, domestic work (e.g. cooking, cleaning), fitness, caring, family, and relationships?” All were then asked, “How negative or positive are these influencers about feminism”?

Engage with Manfluencers or Femfluencers			
	% Engage	% Neg	% Pos
Boys	88%	22%	38%
Girls	90%	13%	76%
Men	57%	15%	20%
Women	70%	12%	28%

Young Australians are overwhelmingly exposed to gendered influences in social media content, but only a minority report that the content is explicitly negative towards feminism. Young girls are the most likely to report explicitly pro-feminist content from gendered content they engage with online.

Online Influences and Gender Attitudes

Using Spearman’s correlation coefficients, we find statistically significant relationships between a number of online influences and attitudes hostile to gender equality, permissive of violence against women, and misogynistic in orientation.

Online Influences and Effects on Gender Attitudes									
	Misogyny	MADVA	Aggrieved Sexism	Traditional VAW	Consent Beliefs	Illegitimacy of Gender Equality	Minimising VAW	Excusing Perpetrator	Mistrusting Women
Manfluencer Engagement	0.30***	0.44***	0.33***	0.47***	0.37***	0.22***	.34***	.43***	.18***
Femfluencer Engagement	.13***	.27***	.23***	.28***	0.23***	0.15***	.19***	.22***	.11***
Social Media	.05**	.06***	.06***	.08***	0.04*	0.00	0.02	.08***	.03*
Online Gaming	.17***	.31***	.21***	.30***	.25***	.14***	.23***	.28***	.15***
Live Streaming	.21***	.36***	.26***	.34***	.30***	.18***	.27***	.32***	.18***
Online Forums	.18***	.30***	.21***	.28***	.25***	.12***	.22***	.28***	.15***
Online Dating	.27***	.52***	.30***	.46***	.42***	.24***	.36***	.46***	.20***
Online Pornography	.29***	.48***	.31***	.39***	.40***	.26***	.35***	.43***	.27***

We find engagement with specific online environments is consistently and meaningfully associated with more hostile gender attitudes across all six measures, though the strength of the associations varies both by platform type and the specific attitudinal outcome measured.

The strongest correlations are found with respondents who engage more with online dating and online pornography. Online dating shows a large correlation with attitudes permissive of violence against women (MADVA: $p = .52$) and a moderate-to-large correlation with traditional VAW attitudes ($p = .46$) and problematic consent beliefs ($p = .42$). Online pornography consumption shows similarly strong association with modern adolescent dating violence attitudes (MADVA) ($p = .48$), consent beliefs ($p = .40$) and traditional VAW attitudes ($p = .39$). Both behaviours show moderate correlations with misogyny and aggrieved sexism. The association with aggrieved sexism may also partly confirm the theoretical basis for the ASQ design, which developed the notion of ‘aggrieved sexism’ to integrate the influence of manosphere and gendered online content on the development of a grievance-based anti-woman ideology⁵⁸.

These findings suggest that **online dating and pornography consumption are the online behaviours most consistently linked with attitudes that normalise, minimise, and excuse violence against women**. The consumption of online pornography is also associated with generalised distrust and suspicion of women as a group – a finding consistent with social research on the objectifying and dehumanising effects of pornography consumption on gender attitudes.

Online dating and pornography consumption are the online behaviours most consistently linked with attitudes that normalise, minimise, and excuse violence against women.

58 Franklin-Paddock, B. et al. (2025).

Meanwhile, manfluencer engagement stands out as the single strongest predictor of general misogyny ($p=0.30$) and shows the strongest association with traditional VAW attitudes ($p=0.47$), MADVA ($p=.44$) and excusing perpetrators ($p=0.43$), with a moderate association with minimising VAW ($p=0.34$). These associations suggest that **manfluencer content is associated with traditional and normalising attitudes towards gender-based violence**, which is consistent with analyses of manfluencer content as promoting patriarchal norms and excusing male violence. It is also consistent with accounts of manfluencer content as a vehicle for the dissemination and normalisation of misogynistic ideology.

Online Influences and Extremist Attitudes

We further examined the relationship between these online behaviours and our measures of extremist and violent attitudes. The central finding is striking: **engagement with specific online environments is consistently and significantly associated with higher endorsement of violent extremist attitudes across every ideological formation examined**. The breadth of this pattern across ideologically diverse outcome measures is theoretically significant and reinforces the argument that certain online environments function as generalised radicalisation environments, rather than pipelines to specific ideological positions.

Online Influences and Effects on Extremist and Violent Attitudes									
	Incel VE	Anti-Feminist VE	Right-wing VE	Left-wing VE	Religious VE	White Ethnic VE	Radical Violence Sympathy	Radical Intentions	Violent Intentions
Manfluencer Engagement	.41***	.32***	.28***	.33***	.43***	.31***	.33***	.31***	.38***
Femfluencer Engagement	.24***	.22***	.18***	.20***	.28***	.16***	.23***	.24***	.24***
Social Media	.07***	.06***	.04**	.10***	.09***	.04*	.10***	.14***	.06***
Online Gaming	.28***	.20***	.17***	.24***	.31***	.20***	.27***	.25***	.24***
Live Streaming	.31***	.25***	.22***	.27***	.34***	.24***	.27***	.27***	.27***
Online Forums	.26***	.20***	.18***	.24***	.28***	.19***	.26***	.29***	.27***
Online Dating	.43***	.35***	.28***	.35***	.47***	.34***	.44***	.37***	.47***
Online Pornography	.39***	.33***	.28***	.34***	.40***	.30***	.45***	.39***	.45***

Across all the extremism measures, the specifically *gendered* online behaviours (manfluencer engagement, online dating, and online pornography) consistently show the largest effects on attitudes supportive of violent extremism and radical violence.

As with the gender attitudes analysis above, **online dating and online pornography show the strongest and most consistent association with extremist attitudes** across the full table. The consistency of these associations across nine ideologically diverse outcome measures is particularly noteworthy.

Manfluencer engagement shows a distinctive attitudinal profile. It is most associated with incel ideology ($p=0.41$) and religious violent extremism ($p=.43$), the two ideological formations most directly connected to patriarchal and masculine entitlement narratives. This pattern is consistent with analysis of manfluencer content ecosystems, wherein figures promote patriarchal gender norms, anti-feminist ideology, and male supremacist frameworks.

These findings suggest that gendered content online is associated not only with hostile gender attitudes, but also with a broader orientation toward political violence and extremism that spans ideological formations. The fact that manfluencer engagement shows higher correlations with several extremist attitude measures than it does with gender attitude measures suggests that **the pathway from manfluencer engagement to extremist orientation is not solely mediated through the cultivation of hostile gender attitudes**, but may involve direct ideological transmission of violent extremist ideologies.

The most striking feature of these correlations is the absence of ideological specificity. Every online behaviour shows significant positive associations with every extremist attitudinal measure, including those that are ideologically opposed (right-wing and left-wing extremism, incel ideology and religious extremism). This cross-ideological consistency suggests that **what these online environments share is not a specific political ideology, but a generalised orientation towards misogyny, violence, grievance, and the legitimisation of extreme action**.

The measures of Violent Intentions and Radical Violence Sympathy show some of the strongest and most consistent correlations with online behaviours – particularly, our gendered online behaviours. Online dating ($p = .47$ for both), pornography ($p = .45$ for both) and manfluencer engagement ($p = .38$ for violent intentions; $.33$ for radical violence sympathy) are all particularly strong associations. This is significant because violent intentions and radical violence sympathy are the most direct behavioural and attitudinal precursors to actual violence. These measures capture not just ideological identification, but willingness to act violently or sympathy for those who do. The strength of the associations between online dating, pornography consumption, and manfluencer engagement with these two measures suggests that **online environments most associated with hostile gender attitudes are also those most associated with the proximal attitudinal precursors to political violence**. This finding has implications for risk assessment and violent extremist prevention.

What is also striking about our findings is that social media use shows the smallest correlations across the table and weaker statistical significance. The near-zero associations between general social media use and extremist attitudes show that it is not simply social media exposure itself that is the operative mechanism linking online behaviours to extremist attitudes. Rather, what these findings together suggest is that it is the **content of what people are exposed to online** that is most affecting violent extremist sympathies.

These findings also support the theory that hostile gender attitudes function as an intermediate mechanism between online influences and violent extremist orientations. That is, specific online environments cultivate gender-based grievance and entitlement, which in turn creates susceptibility to diverse forms of violent extremism.

What this suggests is that **interventions targeting gender attitudes in the online forums where hostile attitudes are most strongly cultivated may have downstream effects on reducing violent extremist orientations as well as effects on gender-based violence**.

Online environments most associated with hostile gender attitudes are also those most associated with the proximal attitudinal precursors to political violence.

Chapter 4:

Qualitative Data on Gender and Extremist Attitudes Online and in Schools

Two further sources of qualitative data were collected for this research: first, a qualitative analysis of online comments from social media posts on this research topic; and second, a survey of over 500 Australian school teachers, asking about their experiences of student misogyny and student extremism in school environments.

Online Comments

Preliminary findings from this research were reported on 7 January 2026 by News Corp. outlets, including the *Herald Sun* and the *Advertiser*. Early findings were also reported on Triple J’s *Hack* program on 11 March 2026. The news stories were then shared on the associated media accounts – on X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook by the *Herald Sun* and *Advertiser* and on Instagram by Triple J.

The posts received over 3000 comments by users. Following an amendment to the original ethics approval to obtain approval to analyse these comments for public reception and sentiment, these comments were downloaded into a dataset, which were de-identified and aggregated for sentiment and discourse analysis.

Platform	Hostile / Dismissive	Supportive / Affirming	Neutral / Questioning
Facebook	~55–60%	~20–25%	~15–20%
Instagram	~45%	~35%	~20%
Twitter/X	~85–90%	~3–5%	~5–10%
Combined dataset	~62–65%	~18–20%	~15–18%

Overall, roughly 65% of the comments were hostile or dismissive of the research as reported, with most commenters rejecting the research findings, attacking the methodology, or mocking the researchers or those expressing support. A further 15-20% were supportive or affirming of the reported research, expressing acceptance of findings, concern, or adding supportive evidence. Finally, 15-20% could be categorised as neutral, asking clarifying questions and neither accepting nor rejecting the reported findings.

A great many of the comments drew on common memes, suggesting that the number of boys expressing problematic gender attitudes was ‘too low’ or ‘rookie numbers.’ A typical sentiment was that:

“We’re waking up to the agenda. The war on men and boys is real.”

A large cluster of comments also frame men and boys as the true victims – of feminism, of media coverage, of education systems, and of social change more broadly. Key patterns of this theme that emerged included:

- Arguing that feminism has ‘gone too far’ and now harms men;
- Claims that boys are being ‘demonised’ simply for being male;
- Framing anti-feminist sentiment as a natural and justified backlash; and
- ‘Reap what you sow’ arguments positioning male extremism as an understandable reaction to feminist overreach.

To paraphrase, prototypical comments in this theme stated sentiments such as:

“Keep demonising boys, men and masculinity. See how far it gets you.”

“Actions have equal and opposite reactions. They have been belittled for a while, and now they have decided that enough is enough.”

This theme is theoretically significant, as it mirrors Kimmel’s ‘aggrieved entitlement’ framework⁵⁹. That is, commenters are not denying that young men hold extreme views. Many are explaining and justifying those views as a rational response to perceived injustice caused by feminism and other equality policies.

A third theme, represented by a substantial minority of comments, involves the active endorsement of anti-feminist and extremist attitudes. This set of comments represent real-world demonstration of the attitudinal patterns under study. The use of manosphere-adjacent language is notable, and signal active engagement in online masculine communities. These comments included:

- Comments celebrating that young men are rejecting feminism;
- Comments expressing hope that the percentage of anti-feminist young men will increase;
- References to red pill ideology, Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), and ‘sigma male’ frameworks that directly echo the manosphere; and
- Explicit statements that women ‘deserve’ what they get or that feminist resistance ‘will get scary.’

59 Kimmel, M. (2005) “Globalization and its Mal(e)contents: The Gendered Moral and Political Economy of Terrorism,” *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, ed. By M.S. Kimmel, J. Hearn, and R. Connell. London: Sage, pp. 414-431; Kimmel, M. (2013), *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*. New York: Nation Books.

“Hell yeah. Just gotta get the other 60% on board.”

“I’m sure we can increase that with the right form of encouragement.”

“Y’all can comment all you like... bottom line is feminism has gone too far and now young men are snapping back. It’s gonna get scary for y’all.”

Finally, a very common theme to emerge in the comments was the deflection to immigration and ethnicity as causes of the rates of problematic attitudes, with many attributing misogynistic attitudes to immigrant or non-Anglo-Australian communities. These comments involved:

- Blaming ‘people imported from cultures where women are property’;
- References to ‘grooming gangs’ as the true source of misogyny;
- Calls for the research to be stratified by ethnicity or cultural background; and
- Framing anti-feminist and extremist attitudes as a justified response to ‘white replacement’ and demographic change.

“Finally someone will stand up to commies and low IQ migrants imported to Australia by liberals.”

“It’s only 40% because 60% of teenagers in Australia aren’t Australian.”

While this was a common theme in the comments, they were also commonly contested by other commenters, who pointed out that Australian-born men commit the majority of domestic violence and femicide in Australia.

Overall, there were qualitative differences in the comments across platforms. Cross-platform comparison reveals that X/Twitter appears to be a more extreme environment for this topic with a near-absence of counter-voices, while Instagram had more moderate or supportive commenters.

Theme	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter/X
Dismissal of research	Very high	Moderate	Very high
Masculine grievance/victimhood	High	Moderate	High
Active endorsement of extremist views	Moderate	Low	Very high
Methodology attacks	High	Low	Moderate
Immigration/ethnicity deflection	Moderate	Low	Very high
Explicit white identity/ethnonationalism	Low	Low	High
Celebratory radicalisation framing	Low-moderate	Low	Very high
Antisemitic/neo-Nazi content	Absent	Absent	Present
Supportive counter-voices	Moderate	High	Very low
Meta-commentary (proving the point)	High	Moderate	Very low

When the comments were analysed for indicators of extremist and misogynistic views, they also yielded qualitative cross-platform differences:

Indicator	Facebook/Instagram	Twitter/X	Overall Assessment
Anti-feminist violence endorsement	Moderate	Moderate-High	Consistent across platforms
Misogynistic dehumanisation	High	Moderate	More prominent on Facebook
Incel/manosphere ideology markers	Moderate	Low-Moderate	More organised on Facebook
Ethnonationalist content	Moderate	Very high	Dramatically elevated on Twitter/X
White identity politics	Low	High	Platform-specific pattern
Neo-Nazi coded language	Absent	Present	Twitter/X only — serious concern
Antisemitic content	Absent	Present	Twitter/X only — serious concern
Glorification of radicalisation	Low-Moderate	Very high	Qualitative difference on Twitter/X
Research delegitimisation	Very high	Very high	Consistent across platforms

There were also striking gender patterns in the comments. A consistent pattern across the dataset is that women commenters predominantly express concern, fear, or affirmation of the research findings, while men commenters are disproportionately represented among hostile and dismissive responses. This gendered engagement pattern is itself consistent with the research’s finding that misogynistic and anti-feminist attitudes are concentrated among male respondents, and reinforces the validity of the study’s findings as a live sample.

Perhaps the most striking analytical finding is that the comment section functions as a live, real-time demonstration of the research it is responding to. The comment section the attitudinal patterns the research identifies: **active anti-feminist sentiment, masculine grievance framing, manosphere ideology markers, the reframing of extremist attitudes as common sense or normal conservatism, and in a minority of cases, endorsement of or threats of violence toward women.** Despite the qualitative differences, the core thematic patterns are replicated across all platforms. This consistency across Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter suggests these are not platform-specific phenomena but reflect broader patterns in how anti-feminist and extremist-adjacent communities engage with academic research on gender and extremism.

Taken together, the three-platform dataset demonstrates that public discourse around research on misogyny and violent extremism is itself a site of contested meaning-making, in which anti-feminist and extremist communities actively work to delegitimise the research, normalise the attitudes it documents, and in some cases celebrate its findings as confirmation of their political project. While comment sections on tabloid media posts are not representative of the general population and may over-represent those with strong, reactive views, they do provide demonstration of how these attitudes are represented, normalised, and spread online and may be influencing others.

Qualitative Data from Australian Teachers

To complement the population survey data, we also ran a second round of research with Australian teachers as individuals who are ‘at the coal face’ of youth ideologies and behaviours. Using a mixed methods qualitative and quantitative survey of 500 teachers from across Australia, this stage of the research sought to deepen our understanding of the extent and expressions of youth radicalisation in their everyday behaviours. This survey provided anonymous, general data from those most closely involved with young people to provide insights into how the attitudes expressed in our first stage of research are manifesting in the daily lives of young Australians.

Amongst the items of the teacher survey, we included a number of open-ended, qualitative questions that sought examples of problematic behaviour experienced by teachers in school settings. The questions addressed: (1) examples of student extremist behaviour; (2) examples of misogyny in the school environment; (3) teachers’ views on social media’s role in shaping student political attitudes; and (4) teachers’ observations of the impact of the social media ban on students under 16.

Theme 1.1: Misogynistic and Manosphere-Linked Extremism

On the question asking for examples of extremist sentiments or behaviours witnessed from students, the most frequently cited form of student extremism was explicitly gender-based: boys expressing or enacting misogynistic attitudes drawn from manosphere ideology. Andrew Tate was named explicitly and repeatedly as a reference point for student behaviour and rhetoric, mirroring the finding of earlier Australian studies⁶⁰.

“Boys quoting misogynist social media influencers in class.”

“Male students looking up to YouTubers such as Andrew Tate. Saying they have to look a certain way, mew and become the alpha male.”

“I’ve seen kids quoting and acting like misogynistic personalities such as Andrew Tate.”

“A Year 9 boy in a Health lesson believed there are two genders only, women have a very set role in society/ relationships and that men should be powerful. Andrew Tate and the like were mentioned.”

“Students expressing views from extremist viewpoints of online personalities.”

This theme was notable for its reach across both primary and secondary contexts. Multiple teachers reported manosphere-adjacent attitudes in students as young as Year 5 and 6, with several expressing surprise at the age at which these views were appearing.

Theme 1.2: Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Ethno-Religious Extremism

The second most frequently cited category involved racial and religious extremism. Teachers reported incidents of antisemitism, anti-Islamic rhetoric, anti-immigration sentiment, and in several cases explicit expressions of white supremacist ideology.

“Celebration of overseas political violence with praise for violence against particular national groups.”

“Nazi symbolism and ideology; racist remarks and taunts.”

“A group of boys in Year 10 had been making rape jokes and then stated that they wish Hitler was still alive and completed the job.”

“A Muslim student expressed an opinion that those of Jewish descent deserved acts of terrorism.”

“Islamic students exhibiting antisemitism about Jews. Islamic students exhibiting hatred about non-Muslim people in general.”

“Students will openly say that they hate Jews and free Palestine.”

Several teachers noted the complexity of ethnic and religious extremism in their school communities, with incidents involving both majority and minority group students. A small number of responses included explicit content that would meet the threshold of serious concern for school safety.

Theme 1.3: Threats of Violence, School Safety, Gang Violence

A smaller but significant cluster of responses described incidents that crossed from attitudinal extremism into direct safety threats.

“We had a student threaten to shoot our school. We got security guards in.”

“Kids who were joking about shooting up someone’s house.”

“A student was able to download a file of a book illegal in Australia about bomb building and tried to print it on site.”

“Students drawing swastikas, a student keeping a violent journal, being obsessed with weapons to the point I couldn’t have scissors accessible in my room.”

60 Wescott, S, Roberts, S. and Zhao, Xuenan (2024). “The problem of anti-feminist ‘manfluencer’ Andrew Tate in Australian schools: women teachers experiences of resurgent male supremacy,” *Gender and Education* 36(2): 167-182.

These responses were a minority but were reported with evident distress by the teachers involved. Several noted a sense of institutional inadequacy in responding to these incidents.

A number of responses described gang-like dynamics, particularly in secondary school contexts, including territorial conflict, racial targeting, and online-to-offline violence.

“There has been an increase in gang mentality. Particularly amongst the young boys. They have started online ‘beef’ with other groups which then turn into violent turf wars.”

“We have seen an increase in our students publicly putting their views online and engaging with extreme behaviours online.”

Most of the qualitative responses to the question about examples of extremism mentioned misogynistic comments and hateful behaviours demonstrated towards girls, female teachers, and LGBTQI+ students and staff. This was also theoretically interesting, as for our respondents, they did not distinguish ‘misogynist’ from ‘extremist’ behaviours in interpreting the question.

Theme 2.1: Differential Authority — Refusing Instructions from Female Teachers

Our second substantive qualitative question asked for examples of misogynistic attitudes and behaviours from students. By far the most consistently reported form of school misogyny was male students’ refusal to follow instructions from female teachers, while complying with the same instructions from male colleagues. This was reported across primary and secondary contexts and by teachers of widely varying experience levels.

“A student will behave poorly for female teachers but not for male teachers.”

“Students refusing to acknowledge female teachers.”

“Boys automatically think they are better than girls even when they don’t have the results to confirm that.”

“Often was told ‘she is a feminist, so of course she isn’t going to punish the girls’, or they would undermine my authority as a teacher and refuse to do as instructed because I am a female teacher.”

“I have been asked if I am on my period when I attempt to discipline students through stern voice or language.”

Many teachers noted the gendered nature of this dynamic was explicit and deliberate — students were not simply misbehaving but were specifically targeting female authority. Several described the experience of calling a male colleague to deliver the same instruction and having students immediately comply.

Theme 2.2: Derogatory Language, Slurs, and Sexual Harassment

Teachers across both primary and secondary levels reported incidents of explicitly demeaning and sexualised language directed at female teachers and students. The severity of this language was striking in many responses.

“Name calling towards female staff and female students that are very sexist (i.e. ‘Washing machine’/‘Dishwasher’) and other inappropriate names.”

“Students will openly say... ‘Get back in the kitchen.’ I have been called a stupid fat cunt.”

“Male students referring to female students as porn stars.”

“Deep level misogynistic behaviour. Teacher being sexually harassed and treated rudely due to gender. Being called bitch and told ‘you’re a dumbass’.”

“They refer to females as bitches and sluts as if they are dehumanising them and they are just a thing.”

Several teachers noted the escalation of this language over recent years, attributing it to manosphere content and online influencers normalising degrading language about women.

Theme 2.3: Traditional Gender Role Enforcement

A very common pattern across both primary and secondary responses involved the enforcement of rigid traditional gender roles — directed at both female teachers and female students. This manifested in explicit statements about women’s domestic roles, exclusion from activities, and dismissal of women’s capabilities.

“Girls having to clean up because it’s their job.”

“Boys thinking girls can’t carry anything heavy.”

“Cooking class — male Arab students will refuse to wash up, saying it’s a woman’s job.”

“Men should earn more money because they work harder.”

“Girls can’t play footy/soccer.”

“My dad said you are a woman and you don’t know.”

Many teachers noted this behaviour was appearing at very young ages — Year 1 and 2 students making gender-based exclusions and comments — and expressed concern about the early age of onset.

Theme 2.4: Manosphere Ideology Markers

A specific and recurrent sub-theme involved behaviour explicitly traceable to manosphere ideology — not merely traditional gender attitudes but the specific language, framing, and reference points of online masculine identity communities.

“Relationships with female staff and not respecting them using jargon from the manosphere.”

“Particular groups of boys have latched on to ideals of the manosphere.”

“Boys trying to have a lot of conflicts on purpose and hurt others during play time — young boys mimicking behaviour they see from their fathers.”

“Men repeating manosphere style quotes about the role or place of women in society.”

The explicit naming of ‘manosphere’ ideology by classroom teachers — individuals who are not researchers and may not have encountered this term in academic contexts — is analytically significant. It suggests the concept has entered mainstream awareness and that teachers are actively recognising it as a distinct and identifiable phenomenon in their classrooms. Again, this finding echoes earlier qualitative research on the manosphere and female teachers’ experiences in Australian classrooms⁶¹.

Theme 2.5: Physical Intimidation and Violence

A smaller but significant subset of responses described physical intimidation and violence with a clear gendered targeting pattern — directed at female teachers and female students by male students.

“Male students physically hurting female teachers and students, but not touching males.”

“Deep fake images of girls published by boys.”

“Boys in Year 10 were rating girls on looks and how they might perform in bed. This made it to the media.”

“A male student made a photoshopped image of female students from our school that he deemed physically undesirable.”

Several teachers described experiences of being personally targeted in physically threatening ways, with some noting that male colleagues were not subjected to comparable behaviour.

Theme 2.6: Cultural and Religious Dimensions

A number of responses noted the intersection of misogyny with cultural and religious background, with several teachers describing specific ethnic communities in which male students were socialised to treat women as subordinate. These responses were complex and required careful reading — some appeared to conflate ethnicity and misogyny in ways that may reflect bias, while others were clearly describing specific, evidenced patterns of behaviour.

“Brothers of Muslim girls believe they are better and have more options.”

“Afghan boys often have no respect for female teachers.”

“Some cultures in the school hold men in a higher status than women.”

It is important to note that misogynistic behaviour was reported across all ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the dataset — it was not confined to any single community. Teachers in schools with predominantly Anglo-Australian student populations reported equally concerning behaviour. The data does not support an interpretation of misogyny as a culturally specific phenomenon.

Theme 3: The Role of Social Media as an Influence on Youth Attitudes/Behaviours

Teachers were asked for their view on the role social media plays in shaping students’ political attitudes. This question generated near-universal engagement, with almost every respondent providing a substantive response. The overwhelming consensus was that social media has a large, primarily negative influence on student political attitudes — with particular concern about algorithmic radicalisation, misinformation, and the absence of critical thinking skills in young people.

The clear majority of teachers expressed the view that social media is having a large and primarily negative influence on student political attitudes. Key elements of this view included:

- Students lacking the critical thinking skills to evaluate online content
- Students treating social media as their primary or sole source of news and political information
- Misinformation spreading rapidly and being accepted uncritically
- Algorithms creating echo chambers and driving students toward extreme content

61 Wescott, S. et al. (2024).

“Students are funnelled into echo chambers, lured into extremist content through innocent avenues such as gaming and workout videos, then exposed to extreme misogyny, racism, homophobia and transphobia. They then come to school and discuss the content they all consume or parrot concerning sound bites in class discussions.”

“Social media is having a greater impact on political attitudes of students as they are exposed to it much younger than previous years, and most of it is not being regulated by parents or caregivers.”

“Students are not old enough to understand these influences on their mind. It only takes watching one video to start going down a rabbit hole of misleading information.”

“A huge role. These kids are so informed on topics from one vacuous perspective. They lack the critical thinking skills to debate these topics and just say things to get a reaction.”

Andrew Tate was named explicitly in responses to Question 3 as well as Question 2, with teachers describing his content and that of similar figures as a primary vehicle for the delivery of misogynistic and extremist political attitudes to young male students.

“Influencers are now seen as celebrities. Students don’t have the critical thinking to understand the ability of platforms to target them.”

“Sadness. Students see popularity of certain figures and strive to be similarly popular.”

“Big role — students are easily persuaded by the political opinions of online figures that they admire.”

Several teachers described the specific dynamic of students citing manosphere influencers as authorities in classroom discussions, and the difficulty of challenging this without appearing to censor students or triggering accusations of bias.

Theme 4: The Impact of the Social Media Delay Policy (Restricting under-16s from social media)

Teachers were asked what impact, if any, the Australian government’s ban on social media for children under 16 had had on students. This question generated the most polarised and contested responses of the four questions. Responses fell into three broad clusters: those who saw no meaningful impact (the largest group), those who saw genuine positive effects, and a smaller group reporting mixed or ambiguous outcomes.

A meaningful minority of teachers reported genuine positive outcomes from the ban, including improved classroom engagement, increased social interaction at lunch and recess, and reduced online bullying.

“They have started socialising and engaging in conversation with each other. Especially at lunch and break time. They are more engaged and less distracted in their learning.”

“A lot less bullying and issues that have been transferred from outside of school into it. It has definitely been beneficial.”

“Students who were on it have had time to do other extracurricular activities after school.”

“More classroom presence and engagement.”

“It was first met with indignation, scepticism and hostile resistance but over time it has been overwhelmingly universally accepted and the benefits have led to greater focus and concentration in class.”

Positive outcomes were more commonly reported in primary school contexts, or in secondary schools with strong compliance culture. Several teachers noted that even where students were still accessing social media, the ban had given parents social permission to enforce limits they had struggled to impose previously.

“Parents mentioned they feel relieved because they can say it’s the law now instead of just being the bad guy.”

Overall Synthesis of Teacher Responses

There were four key cross-cutting themes that emerged from these qualitative responses from teachers:

1

The Manosphere Pipeline

Across all four questions, the most consistent pattern is the presence of an identifiable pathway from manosphere online content to classroom behaviour. Teachers describe students who are consuming manosphere ideology, internalising it as fact, and expressing it in school through disrespect for female authority, derogatory language, and the enforcement of traditional gender roles. The explicitness with which many teachers name Andrew Tate and ‘manosphere ideology’ reflects a level of public awareness that has significant implications for prevention and education policy.

2

Female Teachers as Primary Targets

The data makes clear that female teachers are disproportionately bearing the burden of student behaviour. The consistent pattern of students refusing instructions from female teachers while complying with the same instructions from male colleagues represents a systemic pattern. Many teachers describe feeling unsupported by their institutions in responding to this behaviour, with some noting male colleagues or school leadership that sometimes minimises or normalises it.

3

Age of Onset

While teachers from both primary and secondary schools expressed alarm regarding misogynistic and extremist attitudes, a clear pattern emerged. Responses from earlier primary school teachers describe explicit gender-based exclusion and derogatory comments, while upper primary teachers from Year 5 and 6 describe manosphere ideology markers emerging in students as young as 10-11. This suggests that the problem is not confined to secondary schools, but present across the full range of Australian schooling.

4

Institutional Inadequacy

A recurring undercurrent across all four questions was a sense of institutional inadequacy – schools and teachers are feeling ill-equipped, under-resourced, and insufficiently supported to respond to the scale and nature of problematic youth behaviours and attitudes they were observing. This was expressed in frustration with a lack of training, absence of clear protocols for responding to this behaviour, and a sense that the problems originating outside the school were being managed inside of schools without adequate support.

Chapter 5:

Full Model:

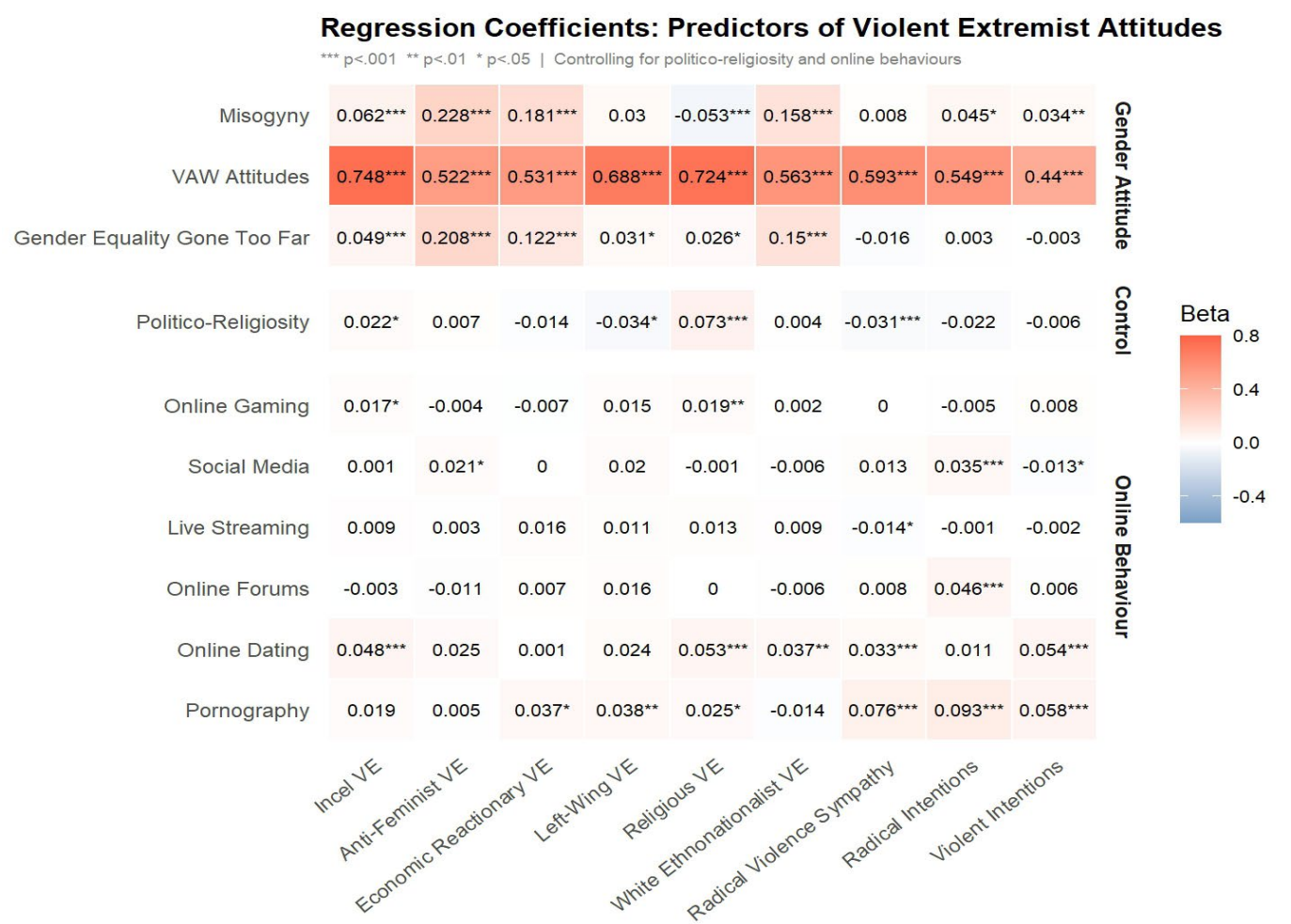
Misogyny, Online Influences, and Violent Extremism

When these variables are combined into a multiple regression, it shows that attitudes permissive of violence against women and misogynistic gender attitudes are the strongest predictors of support for violent extremism. **Online behaviours and gendered attitudes, taken together, account for the majority of variance in support for violent extremism.** But of these variables, the gender variables have much stronger effects on support for violent extremism than the online factors on their own.

We used nine multiple linear regression models, each predicting one form of extremist attitude. Across all nine models, attitudes permissive of VAW emerged as the dominant predictor by a substantial margin. Misogyny and hostility to feminism/gender equality made significant independent contributions in most models, while for online behaviours, the effects were minimal once gender attitudes were controlled for.

What the model suggests is that the relationship between online behaviours and violent extremism is substantially explained by misogynistic attitudes and VAW attitudes that online behaviours cultivate.

Full Regression Model: Gender Attitudes, Online Behaviours and their Effects on Violent Extremism



VAW attitudes (standardised β ranging from .531 to .748) dwarf every other predictor across all nine outcomes. The pattern is unmistakeable:

Dependent Variable	VAW β	Misogyny β	Gender Equality β	Best Online Predictor	Model Fit R ²
Incel VE	.748***	.062***	.049***	Online dating .048***	.565
Religious VE	.738***	.049***	.109***	Online dating .052***	.585
Left-Wing VE	.688***	.030	.031*	Pornography 0.38**	.367
Anti-Feminist VE	.522***	.228***	.208***	Social media .021*	.567
White Supremacist VE	.563***	.158***	.150***	Online dating .037**	.468
Economic Reactionary VE	.531***	.181***	.122***	Pornography .037*	.336
Radical Violence Sympathy	.694***	.068***	.114***	Pornography .038**	.508
Radical Intentions	.580***	.072***	.093***	Online Dating .042***	.364
Violent Intentions	.617***	.065***	.100***	Online dating .047***	.510

This model shows that the single strongest predictor of all of our forms of extremist attitudes is hostile gender attitudes and attitudes permissive of violence against women. These results suggest that the minimisation and denial of violence against women is the most powerful predictor of an individual’s support for violent extremism.

The model fit is exceptional in many instances. Being able to explain 34-59% of variance in violent extremist attitudes is a very strong result for survey-based attitudinal research.

What this model shows is that, once gender attitudes are controlled, online behaviours show very small effects. Where online behaviours maintain independent effects, it is almost exclusively **gendered online behaviours**. Online dating was the most consistent online predictor of support for extremism, remaining significant for incel VE, religious VE, white supremacist VE, as well as for violent and radical intentions. Pornography shows small effects for economic reactionary, left-wing VE, and radical violence sympathy. All other online behaviours are largely non-significant. The near-disappearance of online behavioural effects, despite the fact that these online environments are associated with extremism in bivariate relationships – tells us that this relationship operates substantially through the hostile gender attitudes that these environments cultivate, rather than through direct, independent pathways.

What this analysis suggests is that it is not the fact of social media, online gaming, online forums, or live streaming that is driving extremist attitudes in Australia. Moreso than the platform, the **content matters**. When we control for misogyny and violence against women, this analysis shows that most of the online engagements that have preoccupied countering extremism agencies and governments have little if any independent effect on extremist attitudes. Rather, it appears moreso to be the case that **content that is misogynistic and endorsing violence against women** is the most likely influence on extremist attitudes in Australia.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Taken together, these findings make a compelling empirical case that hostile and violent *gender attitudes* are foundational to the architecture of violent extremism. The data shows that it is the strongest attitudinal predictor of violent extremism across the full ideological spectrum. This tells us that misogyny is not only a social issue, but a national security issue in Australia.

Misogyny is not only a social issue, but a national security issue in Australia.

Second, this study shows that the problems of misogyny and extremist attitudes are **structural, not individual**. Misogyny and extremism are not the product of a handful of ‘bad apples’, but the product of identifiable systems of algorithmic recommendation, manosphere content ecosystems, and an inadequacy of counter-messaging or prevention at appropriate developmental stages. Given the prevalence of problematic gender and extremist attitudes, the policy response cannot rest in criminal justice or pastoral care interventions, but rather requires a structural response rooted in public health frameworks.

To this end, I identify five recommendations for immediate policy and practice reform, directly informed by the research findings.

Policy Recommendations

1

Recommendation 1: Recognise Misogyny and Anti-feminism as a form of Violent Extremism in National Counter-Extremism Framework

Current national security frameworks do not formally recognise gender-based violent extremism as a distinct category warranting dedicated resourcing and response. The quantitative data presented in this report provides strong empirical evidence that anti-feminist and VAW attitudes are a robust, cross-cutting predictor of violent extremist orientation across every ideological formation measured, including those already identified as security priorities (white ethnonationalism, religious extremism, and incel ideology). Our national counter-terrorism framework should update the definition of violent extremism to explicitly include gender-based violent extremism, and resource our security agencies including ASIO, AFP, and state police CVE units accordingly.

Implementing Actions

- Update the definition of violent extremism in the Australian Government’s National Counter-Terrorism Strategy to explicitly include gender-based violent extremism, defined as the use or endorsement of violence motivated by hostility toward women and/or feminist movements.
- Direct ASIO to develop a dedicated analytical stream on gender-based violent extremism, with specific attention to manosphere ideology and its intersections with other extremist formations.
- Commission a formal threat assessment of gender-based violent extremism in Australia, drawing on the empirical foundations established by this and related research.
- Ensure that the definition and operationalisation of gender-based violent extremism is developed in consultation with researchers, practitioners, and survivor advocates.

2

Recommendation 2: Integrate Gender-Based Attitudes into C/PVE Risk Assessment and Early Intervention Frameworks

Current CVE early intervention programs, including those operated through state and territory justice departments, do not systematically assess gender-based attitudes as risk factors. The research evidence presented here establishes that VAW attitude endorsement is the strongest single predictor of violent extremism across all ideological formations. This has direct implications for risk assessment tools used by CVE practitioners, police, and social workers.

Implementing Actions

- Develop validated screening tools for gender-based attitudes — specifically VAW attitude endorsement and anti-feminist violent extremism — for use in CVE risk assessment processes.
 - Integrate gender-based attitude assessment into existing CVE early intervention frameworks at both federal and state/territory levels.
 - Train CVE practitioners, police, and relevant social workers in the identification and assessment of gender-based attitudes as radicalisation risk indicators.
 - Establish data collection mechanisms to enable tracking of gender-based violent extremism referrals and outcomes through existing CVE channels.
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3

Recommendation 3: Inter-agency Cooperation to Address Misogyny, VAW, and Extremism as Co-determining National Priorities, Not Isolated Phenomena

Current policy frameworks in Australia tend to treat gender-based violence and violent extremism as separate streams. Even within CVE policy, misogynistic extremist is treated as distinct from ethnonationalist extremism. The evidence from this research shows clearly that misogyny is a security issue, not just a social issue. This study supports an integrated approach that recognises misogyny and violence against women not solely as social issues, but also as deeply integrated within one of our most urgent national security priorities: countering violent extremism. The solution is not to securitise misogyny, but rather work with existing social policy frameworks aimed at addressing gender-based hate and gender-based violence to inform better C/PVE policy and programming.

Implementing Actions

- Develop inter-agency ‘cluster’ networks to integrate expertise from social services, public health, e-Safety, justice, and security agencies to advise policy and programming development on both issues of C/PVE and VAW prevention.
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- Develop consultation with women’s civil society organizations working on VAW and gender-based violence prevention in developing C/PVE frameworks and in training police and C/PVE professionals in gender-based risk assessment.
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4

Recommendation 4: Invest in Primary Prevention at the Age of Onset

The combined results of the quantitative data from our youth survey, alongside the qualitative teacher data, repeatedly documents misogynistic attitudes and behaviours appearing in youth. From the teacher survey, children as young as 6 and 7 are making explicit gender-based exclusions, repeating misogynistic phrases, and refusing to follow female authority. Waiting until secondary school to address these attitudes means intervening after the formative window has closed. The research evidence supports a significant investment in early years prevention. Given the robust associations between misogynistic attitudes and extremist attitudes found in this research, two key policy considerations are made here: 1) that investment in prevention of misogyny is a matter of C/PVE priority; and 2) investment in prevention programs must come earlier.

Implementing Actions

- Extend respectful relationships education to Foundation level, with age-appropriate curriculum content specifically addressing gender equality, consent (in age-appropriate terms), and respect for authority across gender.
- Fund the development of evidence-based, culturally appropriate early years curriculum materials drawing on established frameworks (e.g. Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships).
- Establish training requirements for early childhood and primary school educators in the recognition and age-appropriate response to gender-based attitudes and behaviours.
- Fund longitudinal evaluation of early intervention programs to establish which approaches are most effective at preventing the development of misogynistic attitudes.

5

Recommendation 5: Target the Manosphere Pipeline – Platform Regulation and Algorithmic Accountability

The findings from this study provide robust empirical evidence that recommendation algorithms are a mechanism through which young people are exposed to misogynistic and extremist content. Given that manfluencer engagement is among the strongest online predictors of both hostile gender attitudes and violent extremist attitudes, and given the real-world effects these attitudes are having in classrooms as reported in the qualitative teacher responses, I recommend that the government consider platform-level regulatory intervention targeting algorithmic recommendation systems as the mechanism by which this content reaches young people at scale.

Implementing Actions

- Require platforms operating in Australia to conduct and publicly report annual algorithmic impact assessments specifically examining the recommendation of gender-hostile and extremist content to users.
 - Mandate that platforms implement age-differentiated recommendation systems that restrict the recommendation of content featuring misogynistic, manosphere, or violent extremist themes to users under 18.
 - Empower the eSafety Commissioner to investigate and impose financial penalties on platforms found to be systematically recommending harmful content through algorithmic amplification.
 - Establish an independent technical body with authority to audit platform algorithms for compliance with algorithmic accountability requirements.
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