

QUEENSLAND TREASURY

Insights into the abuse of older Queenslanders

Crime research report

Queensland Government Statistician's Office

Queensland Treasury

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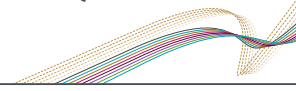
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Report summary

The *Insights into the abuse of older Queenslanders* research project involved investigating information available in police and courts administrative data to contribute to the evidence base regarding the abuse of older Queenslanders. While these sources of information cannot be analysed to show the prevalence of the abuse of older people in the general community due to acknowledged levels of underreporting, they can be examined to determine if the volume of recorded personal crime victimisation and domestic violence orders (DVOs) involving older people has changed over time and provide insight into the characteristics of older people experiencing abuse as reported to the law and justice system.

Key findings

The report's findings are based on analyses of 2008–09 to 2020–21 data. The respondent is the person listed on a DVO as the perpetrator of domestic and family violence (DFV), while the aggrieved is listed as a person experiencing DFV.

Older people accounted for a smaller share of total victims of personal crime victimisations and aggrieved listed on DVOs, than that found in the general community. This underrepresentation may reflect the underreporting of experiences to law and justice agencies and/or findings from other research which shows that the perpetration and experience of crime tends to decline with age.

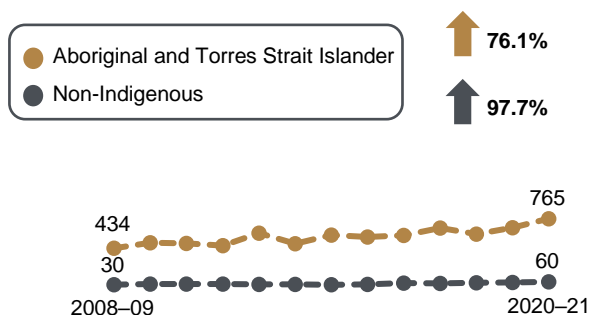
Representation of older people in the community and among victimisations and DVO applications (%)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population who are 50 years or older	14.2	Non-Indigenous population who are 65 years or older	14.8
Victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims	6.1	Victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims	2.3
DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved	11.2	DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved	3.4

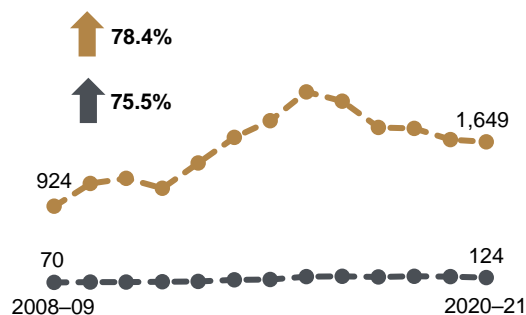
The project defined abuse as the experience of personal victimisation perpetrated by a person known to the victim (a known person) or being listed as the aggrieved on a DVO. Between 2008–09 and 2020–21, more than seven in ten (71.4%) total personal victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims were perpetrated by a known person compared with less than half (45.4%) of those involving non-Indigenous victims. While older people were underrepresented among victims and aggrieved, rates of abuse perpetrated by known persons increased over the observation period and this growth was larger in magnitude than that observed for younger people.

Rates of abuse perpetrated by known persons were higher among older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than older non-Indigenous people across the reporting period. However, while rates of abuse increased for both groups when comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21, a substantial decline in DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was observed following 2015–16 — a year characterised by substantial criminal justice system reform relating to DFV.

Rate of victimisations perpetrated by a known person against an older victim per 100,000 older persons



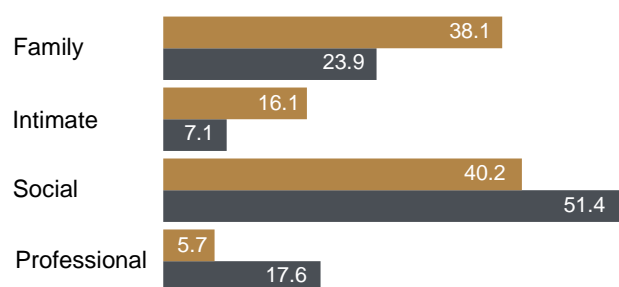
Rate of DVO applications involving older aggrieved per 100,000 older persons



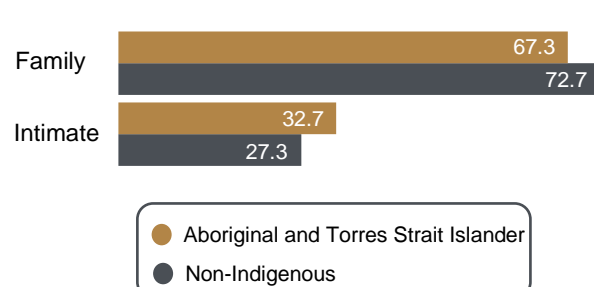
Observed changes in the rate of abuse could reflect changes in the reporting/detection of the abuse of older people by the law and justice system, and/or an increase in the prevalence of abuse experienced by older people over time.

Personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons and DVO applications involving older people tended to relate to actions perpetrated by social contacts and family members, rather than intimate partners or professionals. That said, victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims more often occurred in family and intimate relationships compared with non-Indigenous victims.

Victimisations perpetrated by a known person against an older victim by relationship context (%)



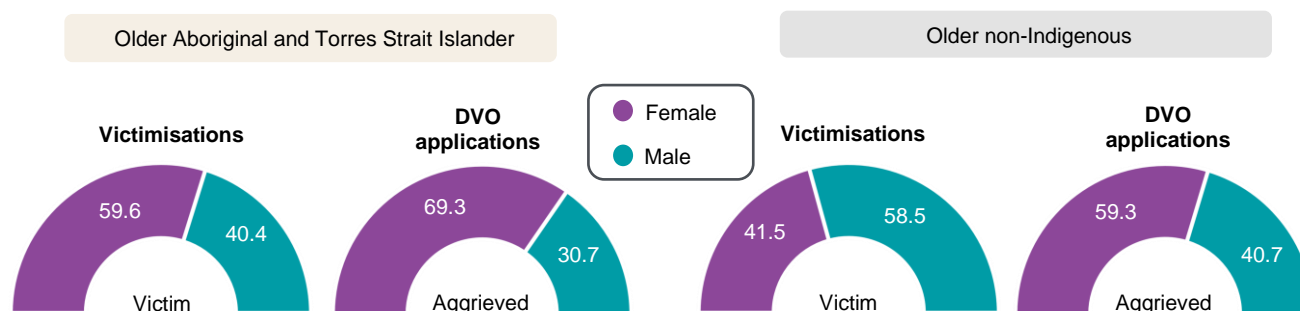
DVO applications involving an older aggrieved by relationship context (%)



The relationship dynamics relating to the abuse of older people tended to be different to that associated with domestic and family violence occurring among younger people (where the involvement of family members was less common). The higher prevalence of family members involved in the perpetration of abuse of older people is likely to reflect changes to relationship dynamics that can occur over time (such as reduced cohabitation with intimate partners due to their passing and increased reliance on other family members).

While females were more commonly listed than males as the aggrieved on DVO applications involving older aggrieved, regardless of Indigenous status, the gender profile of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons against older people varied in relation to Indigenous status. More specifically, male victims were more common than female victims among personal victimisations involving non-Indigenous people. This coincided with males accounting for the majority of offenders and respondents relating to the abuse of both older Aboriginal and Torres Islander and older non-Indigenous peoples.

Gender of older people experiencing abuse (%)



The gender profile of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons and aggrieved listed on DVO applications involving older people aligns with gendered understandings of DFV discussed elsewhere, and the relatively high representation of male victims among personal crime victimisations experienced by older non-Indigenous people is likely to reflect the context in which they occur. That is, non-Indigenous victimisations involving older people more commonly involved social and professional relationships, rather than intimate personal and family relationships, than those recorded for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The age disparity between victims and offenders, and aggrieved and respondents, suggests that the abuse of older people is often intergenerational. However, the gap in average ages was typically smaller for victimisations perpetrated by known persons and DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared with non-Indigenous people.

Age difference between older people experiencing abuse and perpetrators (average ages)

Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		Older non-Indigenous	
<p>Victimisations</p> <p>Female</p> <p>Offender 20.3 years younger than the victim</p> <p>Victim age – 56.8 years</p> <p>Offender age – 36.4 years</p> <p>Male</p> <p>Offender 22.1 years younger than the victim</p> <p>Victim age – 57.0 years</p> <p>Offender age – 34.9 years</p>	<p>DVO applications</p> <p>Female</p> <p>Respondent 18.5 years younger than the aggrieved</p> <p>Aggrieved age – 57.6 years</p> <p>Respondent age – 39.0 years</p> <p>Male</p> <p>Respondent 19.6 years younger than the aggrieved</p> <p>Aggrieved age – 57.6 years</p> <p>Respondent age – 38.0 years</p>	<p>Victimisations</p> <p>Female</p> <p>Offender 27.3 years younger than the victim</p> <p>Victim age – 73.8 years</p> <p>Offender age – 46.4 years</p> <p>Male</p> <p>Offender 28.0 years younger than the victim</p> <p>Victim age – 71.6 years</p> <p>Offender age – 43.6 years</p>	<p>DVO applications</p> <p>Female</p> <p>Respondent 23.6 years younger than the aggrieved</p> <p>Aggrieved age – 71.8 years</p> <p>Respondent age – 48.3 years</p> <p>Male</p> <p>Respondent 28.2 years younger than the aggrieved</p> <p>Aggrieved age – 71.7 years</p> <p>Respondent age – 43.5 years</p>

Indications of intergenerational relationships being involved in abuse aligns with findings elsewhere which show that younger family members, particularly adult children, are often the perpetrators of abuse of older people, although offenders were also often much younger than the victim for victimisations occurring in social and professional relationship contexts also. This may relate to greater opportunities to commit abuse, negative attitudes informed by ageism, stressors related to providing care, and/or findings discussed elsewhere which show the perpetration of crime tends to decrease with age.

The smaller average age gap between perpetrators and older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and aggrieved compared with non-Indigenous victims and aggrieved, may relate to different family structures and differences in the relationship contexts in which abuse occurs for these groups.

Conclusion

While acknowledging the barriers to reporting the abuse of older people to law and justice agencies, this project has demonstrated the value of examining criminal justice data to understand elements of the abuse of older people. These data have shown how the prevalence and characteristics of (arguably more serious) abuse of older people can vary across different demographic groups and offer a way to support ongoing monitoring efforts. The project's findings broadly aligned with other sources of information, but also offered a way to observe trends over time and build further information regarding the abuse of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with the latter being an acknowledged information gap.

Variation in the characteristics of abuse of older people highlights the importance of targeted harm reduction strategies that account for these differences. For example, issues of power and control may be less relevant to the abuse of older people than is the case for domestic and family violence given the broader range of relationship contexts in which this type of abuse may occur. Having said this, intimate partner violence is still an element in the abuse of older people, for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples more so than older non-Indigenous people.



1.0 Introduction

This report presents findings from the *Insights into the abuse of older Queenslanders* research project (research project) which examined the volume and characteristics of the abuse of older Queenslanders coming to the attention of police and courts between 2008–09 and 2020–21. The research findings are based on the analysis of administrative data related to personal crime recorded by police and domestic violence order (DVO) applications lodged in courts. They complement those previously reported by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) regarding domestic and family violence (DFV) and abuse of older people.¹

The project was undertaken in a context of continuing concern regarding the abuse of older people. Ongoing efforts by the Queensland Government to address this issue include initiatives focusing on the awareness and prevention of the abuse of older people and support for those affected, as well as providing support to the implementation of the *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023* (Council of Attorneys-General 2019a). The attention given to improving responses to the abuse of older people has been informed by the recent *National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study*, which estimated 14.8% of older Australians experienced abuse in the previous year (Qu et al. 2021), and the ageing of Queensland's population, with more than one in five Queenslanders projected to be aged 65 years or older by 2051 (QGSO 2018). While older age alone does not make a person more vulnerable to abuse, factors associated with ageing may increase vulnerability to abuse. These factors include disability and cognitive impairment, as well as other social and structural factors such as isolation and negative community attitudes informed by ageism (Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) 2017a).

While most older people experiencing abuse do not initiate legal responses, preferring instead to seek support from friends and family (Qu et al. 2021), there is little information on those who do engage with the police and/or courts. This information gap was addressed by the research project described in this report, which also examined for possible differences relating to gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.²

The report begins by providing background information on the abuse of older people, before outlining the project's research approach. Project findings are then presented and discussed.³

The abuse of older people can include emotional, financial, physical, sexual and social abuse and neglect, however not all forms of abuse could be explored by the research project.

The term 'abuse of older people' is used in this report instead of 'elder abuse' to reflect the current language used in the national policy landscape (Council of Attorneys-General 2019a; Kaspiew et al. 2019). It is recognised that this term may not be appropriate in all contexts.⁴

¹ See, for example, *Applications for domestic violence orders in Queensland, 2008–09 to 2017–18* (QGSO 2021a) and *Elder abuse, Queensland, September 2016* (QGSO 2016).

² The abuse of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was explored in relation to that experienced by older non-Indigenous people. The project team respectfully acknowledges the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, however data accessed by the project could not enable exploration of this diversity within older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

³ Data presented in this report may differ from those published elsewhere by QGSO and others, due to differences in counting rules applied and data extraction dates. Readers are therefore urged to exercise caution when making comparisons between publications.

⁴ A shift away from the term 'elder abuse' has been made since the term 'elder' has a specific meaning in some communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which is distinct from broader understandings relating to a person over a certain age threshold (Kaspiew et al. 2019). Additionally, the term 'older person' is suggested to better capture a continuum of seniority (Kaspiew et al. 2019). Reference to the term 'elder abuse' is retained in the report when referring to original phrasing used in referenced literature.



2.0 Background

This chapter provides information to support the interpretation of project findings described in this report. First, a discussion of the nature and dynamics of abuse of older people is provided, including how it is defined, the characteristics of victims and perpetrators, and its relationship with DFV. This is followed by a summary of key initiatives relevant to the abuse of older people, and an overview of how police and courts respond to abuse of older people in Queensland.

2.1. Nature and dynamics of abuse of older people

Research examining the abuse of older people has increased in prominence in recent years and provides a foundation for its understanding in Australia. This work informed how the project approached researching the abuse of older people and highlights important conceptual issues, such as its multifaceted nature and its intersection with DFV.

2.1.1. Defining abuse of older people

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) recently developed a definition of the abuse of older people for the Elder Abuse National Research Program. This followed the recognised variability of definitions found across policy, practice and research contexts and involved a review of existing definitions of elder abuse; the conceptual and theoretical approaches to understanding the abuse of older people; and measures used in other key international prevalence studies. Understandings developed through this review work were combined with workshops conducted nationally with service providers, older people and carers to settle on a working definition.

The AIFS defined the abuse of older people as:

... a single or repeated act or failure to act, including threats, that results in harm or distress to an older person. These occur where there is an expectation of trust and/or where there is a power imbalance between the party responsible and the older person (Kaspiew et al. 2019, p. 4).

The AIFS definition conceptualises the abuse of older people as occurring within the context of different types of relationships where there is an expectation of trust and/or where there is a power imbalance. These relationships include intimate partners, intragenerational family relationships (e.g. siblings), intergenerational family relationships (e.g. children and grandchildren), and non-family relationships (e.g. professionals, carers, friends, neighbours and acquaintances), but excludes strangers (Qu et al. 2021).⁵ Acts or omissions covered by the AIFS definition include neglect and abuse that is physical, emotional/psychological, financial/economic, sexual, or social in nature (Kaspiew et al. 2019); examples of behaviour constituting these forms of abuse are outlined in Table 1.⁶ For people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, abuse may also relate to language and cultural background (such as denying access to important information in an older person's preferred language) (Qu et al. 2021). The AIFS definition does not set thresholds in relation to frequency and severity of acts and omissions (and their impact), nor is the precise age or level of vulnerability of 'older people' specified, as these may vary in different contexts (Kaspiew et al. 2019).

The AIFS definition was used by the first *National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study* to conceptualise abuse of older people when estimating its prevalence in the general community (Qu et al. 2021). The researchers in this study found that there was broad support for the appropriateness of this conceptual definition in a research context, however noted that it needs further testing in relation to specific groups in the community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, those within the LGBTIQ+ community, people with cognitive impairment and people living in residential care settings (Qu et al. 2021, p. 164). For example, in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts it has been recognised that the conceptualisation of abuse of older people requires further consideration around understanding what behaviours and circumstances may be considered abuse (or not) in the context of cultural obligations (Kimberley Birds 2020; Kaspiew, Carson and Rhoades 2018; Office of the Public Advocate 2005).

⁵ In developing the working definition, the AIFS noted that there was a lack of consensus among those consulted around whether strangers, or organisations and institutions involved in the delivery of care to older people, should be included as potential perpetrators (Kaspiew et al. 2019).

⁶ Research findings from the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study indicate that the construct of neglect needs further consideration in relation to the conception of abuse of older people. This is due to distinctive characteristics that set it apart from other types of abuse and includes extending consideration to older people who experience neglect as a result of having no-one to help, which is excluded from the current definition (Qu et al. 2021).

**Table 1 Behaviour included in definitions of abuse of older people**

Type of abuse	Examples of behaviour
Emotional/psychological abuse	Verbal abuse such as yelling insults and name calling; intimidation/bullying and harassment; damaging or destroying property; threatening to harm the older person or their family members, friends or pets; threatening to withdraw care and preventing or attempting to prevent access to funds, telecommunication or transport.
Financial/economic abuse	Misuse or theft of finances or other assets and abuse or misuse of powers of attorney.
Neglect	Failure to provide access to essentials such as food and hydration, clean and appropriate shelter, adequate hygiene, or medical care.
Physical abuse	Pushing/shoving, hitting/slapping, punching and kicking.
Sexual abuse	Unwanted sexual contact and rape.
Social abuse	Preventing or attempting to prevent the older person from having contact with family, friends or community.

Note: While noted separately here, in some literature 'social abuse' is considered part of 'emotional/psychological abuse' (see, for example, the *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023* (Council of Attorneys-General 2019a).

Source: Adapted from Kaspiew et al. 2019, p. 4.

2.1.2. Prevalence and characteristics of abuse of older people

Various sources of information can provide insight regarding the nature of abuse of older people. The most comprehensive research to date is the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study (Qu et al. 2021), which estimated that 14.8% of Australians living in the community aged 65 years or older experienced abuse in the previous year. The most common form of abuse reported was emotional/psychological abuse (11.7%), followed by neglect (2.9%), financial/economic abuse (2.1%), physical abuse (1.8%) and sexual abuse (1.0%). Further, 3.5% of those surveyed referred to experiencing multiple forms of abuse, with emotional/psychological abuse and neglect being the most common combination. Although the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study did not include those living in residential care, another study suggested that 39.2% of aged care residents have experienced emotional/psychological abuse, physical abuse and/or neglect (Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Aged Care Royal Commission) 2020).⁷ These findings can be supplemented with administrative data to understand older people experiencing abuse who interact with services, such as abuse notifications reported to Queensland's Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU).⁸ For example, the most recent EAPU annual report noted that emotional/psychological abuse was the most common form of abuse reported (72.9% of abuse cases relating to close or intimate relationships), followed by financial/economic abuse (62.6% of abuse cases relating to close or intimate relationships) (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021).

Research also suggests that the prevalence and characteristics of abuse varies across different demographic groups of older people and other factors such as socio-economic status, culture, and family structure (Qu et al. 2021). This includes findings indicating that while women were only slightly more likely than men to experience abuse overall (although this difference was statistically significant), women were more likely to experience sexual abuse and neglect while men were more likely to experience physical abuse (Qu et al. 2021). Findings also indicated that the prevalence of abuse tended to decrease with age, particularly for physical, sexual and emotional/psychological abuse. Further, lower socio-economic status has been associated with a higher risk of abuse overall, particularly financial, sexual and emotional/psychological abuse (Qu et al. 2021) and EAPU reporting suggests that older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are overrepresented among abuse notifications compared with their representation in the Queensland community (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021).

The available information also highlights the typically intergenerational nature of abuse of older people, with adult children comprising the largest group perpetrating abuse of older people (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021; Qu et al. 2021; Spike

⁷ Individually, the prevalence estimates were 30.8% for neglect, 22.6% for emotional/psychological abuse, and 5.0% for physical abuse (Aged Care Royal Commission 2020).

⁸ The EAPU is administered by UnitingCare and funded by the Queensland Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. While data derived from abuse notifications disclosed to the EAPU do not necessarily reflect the patterns of abuse of older people occurring in the community, these data provide important information on the dynamics of abuse of older people that is disclosed to the Helpline.



2015). For example, the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study found that family members are the most common perpetrators, particularly adult children (sons and daughters accounted for 18.0% of perpetrators) (Qu et al. 2021). This is supported by data from the EAPU which show that sons (37.5%) and daughters (37.0%) were most commonly the perpetrators involved in abuse notifications involving close or intimate relationships (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021). It has been suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic may have increased the stressors associated with abuse by adult children, for example, increased cohabitation resulting from economic stress potentially leading to more conflict (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021).

Abuse of older people may also occur in several other relationship contexts including among intimate partners, social relationships (such as friends, acquaintances and neighbours) and professional relationships (such as carers and service providers). Results from the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study showed that:

- intimate partners accounted for 10.4% of perpetrators of any form of abuse, including accounting for the largest proportion of perpetrators of neglect (25.0%)
- social relationships such as friends, acquaintances and neighbours accounted for 27.6% of perpetrators of any form of abuse, with friends accounting for a particularly large proportion (41.5%) of perpetrators of sexual abuse
- professional carers and service providers accounted for 8.8% of perpetrators of any form of abuse, with neglect being the form of abuse they were most often involved with (13.7% of perpetrators being professional carers and 13.4% being service providers) (Qu et al. 2021).

2.1.3. Relationship with DFV

Abuse of older people can constitute DFV in circumstances where the abuse is perpetrated by a family member, a person's intimate partner or ex-partner (ALRC 2017a; Special Taskforce on DFV in Queensland 2015).⁹ However, there are recognised differences in the literature in relation to the dynamics and conceptualisation of abuse of older people compared with DFV (ALRC 2017a; Joosten, Vrantsidis and Dow 2017; Special Taskforce on DFV in Queensland 2015). Some of the key similarities and differences between DFV and abuse of older people are summarised in Table 2.

The conceptual similarities and differences between abuse of older people and DFV requires further consideration in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. For example, there is discussion in the literature that perspectives of DFV relating to power, control and gender dynamics may not be appropriate to understanding DFV experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including that occurring in kinship relationships (Blagg et al. 2018; Olsen and Lovett 2016; Wundersitz 2010). Further, while the limited available research on abuse of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suggests that intergenerational financial/economic abuse is a significant concern in some communities, cultural and social factors have been recognised as important to understanding the context in which this occurs (Kimberley Birds 2020; Gooda 2012; Office of the Public Advocate 2005; Wundersitz 2010).

⁹ The relationship between the abuse of older people and DFV may be conceptualised differently across policy documents and frameworks. For example, in the draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children in 2022–2032 (Department of Social Services 2022) elder abuse has been recognised as a form of family violence but not intimate partner violence. The Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board (DFVDRAB) recognised a distinction between intimate partner violence as experienced by older people and elder abuse in their 2019–20 Annual Report (DFVDRAB 2020).



Table 2 Similarities and differences in understanding abuse of older people compared with DFV

Similarities between abuse of older people and DFV	When compared with DFV, abuse of older people:
Occurs in the context of intimate relationships and family relationships.	Is more often intergenerational than spousal. Can also occur in other relationships involving trust, such as friends and acquaintances or those involved in caregiving.
Power imbalance between the victim and perpetrator.	Is characterised by a more dynamic power imbalance across the life-course as age-related vulnerabilities change. Is less likely to be driven by gendered dynamics of power and control.
Many of the barriers to disclosing or reporting abuse either informally or formally, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fear of consequences to self and perpetrator • fear of loss of relationship • lack of options • stigma, shame, embarrassment. 	May involve a greater level of concern regarding consequences for the perpetrator if abuse is disclosed, if perpetrated by adult children.
Victims more likely to be women than men, although this is substantially more the case in the context of DFV.	Is less likely to involve the perpetration of abuse by men against women.
Some of the risk factors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perpetrator misuse of alcohol and/or drugs • previous victim experiences of abuse/violence. 	May involve risk factors relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dependence of the perpetrator on the older person (e.g. financial, housing) • vulnerabilities experienced by the older person related to ageing (e.g. decision-making capacity).
The types of abuse experienced, such as emotional/psychological abuse, financial/economic abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and social abuse.	Can also include neglect.

Source: Adapted from Joosten, Vrantsidis and Dow 2017, p. 16, with additional information sourced from Dow et al. 2020 and Qu et al. 2021.

2.2. Initiatives supporting responses to the abuse of older people

Key initiatives within the national and Queensland policy and service delivery environment relevant to the abuse of older people are described briefly in this section.

2.2.1. National policy and service delivery environment

The national legal, policy and service delivery environment has been characterised by increased attention given to the abuse of older people in recent years. A summary of recent developments is provided below.

Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response

The *Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response* report, completed by the ALRC in 2017, considered how Commonwealth, state and territory laws and legal frameworks might better support the protection of older people from abuse. This included consideration of approaches to safeguard the autonomy of older people with respect to guardianship and financial administration, superannuation, social security, banking, wills, enduring appointments, family agreements, and aged care. The report included many recommendations for law reform across these areas, as well as recommendations to develop a national plan that includes a national policy framework to address elder abuse, outlines key strategies and actions for governments and the community, and commissions a national elder abuse prevalence study to build the evidence base for policy responses.



Initiatives to protect the rights of older Australians and safeguard quality of care in the aged care system

The Australian Government announced funding in the 2018 Budget for a suite of measures to address the abuse of older Australians. Many of these measures related to the implementation of recommendations from the *Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response* report (ALRC 2017a), but also included various additional measures aimed at protecting the rights of older Australians and safeguarding the quality of care provided in the aged care system. Some of these measures were:

- the development of an online elder abuse knowledge hub (completed) (see Compass 2021)
- the trialling of frontline services for older people experiencing abuse (specialist elder abuse units, health-justice partnerships, and case management and mediation services) (ongoing)¹⁰
- supporting the development of a national plan on elder abuse through collaboration with states and territories (completed and discussed further below)
- supporting targeted research activities to strengthen the evidence base on elder abuse, including a national prevalence study (completed and discussed further below) (Attorney-General's Department 2022).

The Australian Government also committed funding for the establishment of the independent Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Attorney-General's Department 2022), in response to a recommendation made in the *Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Processes* report (Carnell and Paterson 2017). The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission commenced operations in 2019, and brings together aged care regulation, compliance and complaints handling into a single entity, with the intention of strengthening the regulation of the quality of care in the aged care sector. This includes the implementation of the Serious Incident Response Scheme which mandates that aged care providers must report abuse experienced by people in their care (Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission 2021).¹¹

National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023

The National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023 (National Plan) was launched in March 2019 and was developed in response to a recommendation made in the *Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response* report (ALRC 2017a). The National Plan complements existing state and territory policies on ageing and abuse of older people and sets out a framework to guide federal, state and territory government action to respond to this issue across five priority areas:

- enhancing our understanding
- improving community awareness and access to information
- strengthening service responses
- planning for future decision-making
- strengthening safeguards for vulnerable older adults (Council of Attorneys-General 2019a).

The National Plan is supported by an implementation plan that outlines specific activities governments are responsible for across each priority area (Council of Attorneys-General 2019b).

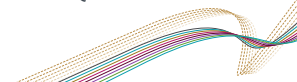
National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study

The *National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study* was delivered as part of the national research program under the National Plan to build an evidence base around the nature and extent of abuse of older Australians and follows a key recommendation made in the *Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response* report (ALRC 2017a).¹² The study also captured community awareness, knowledge and attitudes relating to elder abuse, and the experiences and views of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The study included a survey undertaken with older people aged 65 years

¹⁰ In Queensland this includes a health-justice partnership through the Caxton Legal Centre and Queensland Health to identify and support older people who are at risk or are experiencing abuse (Queensland Health 2020), and case management and mediation services through Relationships Australia Queensland (Relationships Australia Queensland 2022a, 2022b).

¹¹ The eight reportable incident types include unreasonable use of force, unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual contact, neglect, psychological or emotional abuse, unexpected death, stealing or financial coercion by a staff member, inappropriate use of restrictive practices and unexplained absence from care (Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission 2022).

¹² The research reports completed as part of the national research program also include Insights into vulnerabilities of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over (AIHW 2019) and Insights into abuse of older people: Analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics datasets (Hill and Katz 2019).



or older, and another survey undertaken with people aged 18 to 64 years. The research report was published in 2021 (Qu et al. 2021).

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Aged Care Royal Commission) was established in 2018 and was responsible for investigating the delivery, quality, and accessibility of aged care services, including the extent of substandard care, mistreatment, and abuse (Aged Care Royal Commission 2021). In its final report, the Aged Care Royal Commission found that identifying the extent of substandard care in the aged care system was very difficult, noting that the available data and information have substantial limitations. However, it was able to establish that substandard care is widespread, and abuse perpetrated by staff and other residents is a significant concern. The final report outlined a suite of recommendations to support the improvement of the aged care system, among which was a recommendation for improved aged-care related information and statistics. It was also noted that realisation of the recommendations requires a rights-based approach to aged care, which includes residents' right to freedom from degrading treatment or abuse, and the right to voice opinions and make complaints (Aged Care Royal Commission 2021).

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) was established in 2019 and is responsible for investigating ways to prevent and better protect people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This includes achieving best practice in reporting, investigating and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability, and promoting a more inclusive society that supports people with disability. The experiences of older people with disability living in private homes is an area of inquiry for the Disability Royal Commission, and includes examining how laws, policies and practices can support older people with disability to live free from violence and abuse at home (Disability Royal Commission 2020).

As part of the Disability Royal Commission's research agenda, a report has been published on the nature and prevalence of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability in Australia (Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health 2021). The report notes that there is limited data on these experiences for older people with disability, with the available data from the ABS having notable limitations (Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health 2021). The work of the Disability Royal Commission is ongoing at the time of writing, with the final report due in September 2023.

2.2.2. Queensland policy and service delivery environment

The awareness and prevention of the abuse of older people, and support for those affected, is an important focus for the Queensland Government. In tandem with the federal initiatives outlined above, state-level mechanisms in place to respond to this issue exist within a multifaceted framework involving both targeted initiatives and broader service delivery responses relevant to older people experiencing abuse. These initiatives and responses, and the agencies responsible for delivering them, are outlined briefly in Table 3.¹³

The continued funding and delivery of targeted initiatives addressing the abuse of older people has been identified as important for supporting Queensland Government reform and strategy in other areas. This includes supporting the realisation of the government's vision for an age-friendly Queensland (Queensland Government 2016a), as well as supporting efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence (Queensland Government 2019a), violence against women (Queensland Government 2016b), and DFV (Queensland Government 2019b). Further, addressing the abuse of older people aligns with obligations to protect the human rights of older people enshrined in the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld).

¹³ The initiatives and responses identified in Table 3 are not exhaustive and it is recognised that the service delivery environment relevant to addressing the abuse of older people is complex, involving many government and non-government actors.

Table 3 Queensland Government mechanisms to prevent and respond to abuse of older people

Initiative/service delivery response	Agency responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU) and its Helpline. Funding of the Seniors Legal and Support Service to provide free services for older people concerned about abuse, mistreatment or financial exploitation. Delivery of the annual state-wide elder abuse prevention and awareness campaign Delivery of a Scams and Fraud Awareness Line to prevent financial exploitation of other people. 	Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of integrated responses and support services for DFV victims, including older people. Imposition of DVOs (through Queensland Courts) to provide protection to older people experiencing abuse. 	Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policing responses to abuse of older people, including prevention activities, referral support, lodgement of applications for DVO, and investigation of criminal offences, with support from the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command. 	Queensland Police Service (QPS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health responses for older people experiencing abuse, including through hospital admissions and presentations to emergency departments. Health-justice partnerships to identify and support older people who are at risk or who are experiencing abuse. 	Queensland Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy on behalf of older people with impaired decision-making capacity in relation to guardianship and related matters. 	Office of the Public Advocate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking, and raising community awareness of, investigative and protective functions for older people with impaired decision-making capacity (with referrals to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal as required). 	Office of the Public Guardian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating the provision of wills, enduring appointments and advance care planning. 	Public Trustee of Queensland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of legal advice and representation for older Queenslanders who are financially disadvantaged. 	Legal Aid Queensland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of emergency accommodation for those at risk of homelessness, including for those experiencing domestic and family violence. 	Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

Source: Information collated by QGSO.

Addressing the abuse of older people is a key focus of the Queensland Government's broader DFV reform activity relating to the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland (Not Now, Not Ever)* report, prepared by the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland (2015).¹⁴ This has involved the ongoing implementation of actions by the Queensland Government in response to the findings of commissioned reviews on the abuse of older people that arose from recommendation 11 in the *Not Now, Not Ever* report.¹⁵ These actions include the ongoing funding and delivery of targeted initiatives identified in Table 3, as well as other actions relating to legislation, education, training and information, service and system interventions and responses, and improved data collection (Queensland Government 2019a). The continued implementation of these DFV reform-related activities, and ongoing service delivery responses outlined in Table 3, also contribute to the Queensland Government's efforts in

¹⁴ For a more detailed overview of Queensland's DFV reform activities, see the *Summary of criminal justice reforms relating to domestic and family violence* report (QGSO 2021b).

¹⁵ Recommendation 11 from the *Not now, not ever* report states that 'The Queensland Government commissions a specific review into the prevalence and characteristics of elder abuse in Queensland to inform development of integrated responses and a communications strategy for elderly victims of domestic and family violence' (Special Taskforce on DFV in Queensland 2015, p. 20). The QGSO (2016) report *Elder abuse, Queensland, September 2016: Report based on information sourced from administrative data collections* and the *Review into the Prevalence and Characteristics of Elder Abuse in Queensland* report (Blundell et al. 2017) were commissioned in response to this recommendation.



supporting the implementation of the National Plan to address the abuse of older people (Council of Attorneys-General 2019b). More recently the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (2021) made recommendations to improve services and programs accessed by older people experiencing and using DFV and to raise awareness regarding the coercive control of older people.

The next section provides an overview of how police and the court may respond to the abuse of older people through the investigation of criminal offences and the DVO framework, followed by important contextual information on the use of the legal system by older people experiencing abuse.

2.3. Police and court responses to the abuse of older Queenslanders

The Queensland legal system plays a role in responding to older people experiencing abuse. This includes police investigation of criminal offences involving older people and referral of victims and offenders to support services (QPS 2022). Protection against abuse may also be provided by DVO which can be lodged by police, the older person experiencing abuse or another authorised person.¹⁶ A brief outline of criminal offences that may constitute abuse of older people and the DVO framework is provided below. This is followed by a discussion of research findings that indicate that older people experiencing abuse do not always seek support from the legal system.

2.3.1. Criminal offences

While there is no specific criminal offence in Queensland for abuse of an older person, criminal behaviour towards an older person can be prosecuted under of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld) (Criminal Code). This includes offences such as physical and sexual assault, stalking, neglect, and financial abuse (stealing and fraud) (Blundell et al. 2017). Under the Criminal Code, an assault on a person aged 60 years or older is treated as a serious assault (Blundell et al. 2017). Police can also investigate criminal behaviour towards an older person that occurs in the context of a breach of DVO. In its inquiry into laws and frameworks that protect and safeguard older people from abuse, the ALRC (2017a) noted that existing state and territory criminal laws generally provide appropriate offences that adequately respond to criminal conduct which may be considered elder abuse. The Australian Capital Territory is the only Australian jurisdiction to have introduced legislation specifically criminalising abuse of a vulnerable adult (effective April 2021) (Justice and Community Safety Directorate 2021).

2.3.2. DVO framework

Legislative provisions in the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) (the Act) provide a framework that enables protection for older people who are victims of abuse in a DFV context through the use of DVO. Behaviour defined as DFV in the Act is considered to cover many types of abuse of older people, including abuse that is physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, or economic in nature, and any other behaviour that is threatening or manipulative (Blundell et al. 2017).

A DVO is a civil order imposed by the court that is typically imposed following a DVO application lodged by police, but may also be lodged by private individuals.¹⁷ A DVO application, and any resulting order, must involve an aggrieved (person/people experiencing DFV) and respondent (the person who has allegedly committed DFV) who are in an intimate personal, family, or an informal care relationship.¹⁸ The central purpose of a DVO is to protect the aggrieved or other named persons listed on the order from further DFV perpetrated by the respondent. The protection of aggrieved and named persons is achieved primarily by requiring the respondent to adhere to conditions, both standard and tailored, that explicitly limit their behaviour. While it is not a criminal offence to be listed as the respondent on a DVO, it is a criminal offence for a respondent to breach the conditions of a DVO.

¹⁶ Other responses to abuse of older people may also be sought through the legal system. This includes other civil remedies seeking to address emotional/psychological and financial/economic abuse, as well as the use of the guardianship and administration framework in Queensland. For more information on these responses see Elder Abuse: Joint issues paper (Queensland Law Society and The Public Advocate 2022) for an overview.

¹⁷ Private DVO applications are lodged directly with the court by the aggrieved or a lawyer, friend or family member acting on behalf of the aggrieved. Police DVO applications are made on behalf of the aggrieved and are often initiated following a call for police assistance regarding DFV. The court can also make a DVO on their own initiative (without application) as part of a criminal or child protection proceeding.

¹⁸ Intimate personal relationships include partner or ex-partner relationships, while family relationships include relationships such as child, sibling, or cousin. An informal care relationship is where one person is providing personal care to another, excluding that occurring under a commercial arrangement.



2.3.3. Use of the legal system by older people experiencing abuse

Findings from the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study indicate that older people living in the community who have experienced abuse do not commonly seek support through the legal system.¹⁹ This study found that the majority (61.5%) of older people who self-reported experiencing abuse in the past year did not seek help or advice from any channels (Qu et al. 2021). Of those who did seek help or advice, this was most commonly sought through informal channels such as friends and family, and to a lesser degree through a GP or nurse and/or a professional carer (Qu et al. 2021). A small share of older people who sought help or advice in relation to abuse did so through police (17.4%) or lawyers (15.4%), although differences in help-seeking through these channels was evident when looking at the type of abuse experienced (Qu et al. 2021). For example, among older people who sought help or advice, those who had experienced physical abuse (also rated the most serious form of abuse by respondents) were most likely to seek support from police compared with other sources of help or advice, while those who experienced financial/economic abuse often sought support from a lawyer, although they were still more likely to seek support from family, friends or a professional carer / social worker (Qu et al. 2021). When looking at the group of older people who indicated they had taken action to stop the abuse (regardless of whether they reported seeking help or advice from a third party), 8.9% said they had sought out a legal advice service, and a very small group (3.8%) had a safety or restraining order made against the perpetrator (increasing to 9.5% for those who had experienced physical abuse) (Qu et al. 2021).

The literature indicates there are notable barriers for older people in disclosing or reporting abuse (including to police) or pursuing legal avenues (such as DVO applications) (Blundell et al. 2017; Dow et al. 2020). These barriers include stigma, shame and embarrassment, dependence on the perpetrator, and concern over negative consequences for the perpetrator and for themselves (Dow et al. 2020). While these barriers are similar to those documented in relation to disclosure or reporting of DFV, concern over negative consequences for the perpetrator is particularly heightened when abuse is being perpetrated by adult children (Dow et al. 2020). Barriers to disclosure of abuse may also occur when an older person does not define the behaviours as abusive, or has impaired capacity (such as cognitive impairment, or other disability) and may not recognise abuse is occurring (Qu et al. 2021). Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing abuse may face additional barriers to disclosure relating to fear of government authorities and reluctance to engage in criminal justice processes, as has been identified in DFV contexts (Blagg et al. 2018; Qu et al. 2021). Additionally, in contexts relating to cultural obligations, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may not consider certain behaviours perpetrated by family members as abuse (Kimberley Birds 2020; Office of the Public Advocate 2005).

Despite acknowledging the barriers to reporting, there is value in understanding the volume of engagement with police and courts by older people experiencing abuse, and how this may have changed over time. This can be achieved through an examination of administrative data, which can also provide insight into the demographic profile of older people engaging with the legal system due to abuse, as well as the relationship contexts of these abuse experiences. This endeavour is the main objective of the research project described in this report, and further information on the project's research approach provided in the next chapter.

¹⁹ There is no publicly available data about abuse of older people in aged care settings that comes to the attention of the legal system, though research undertaken with aged care residents indicates police are rarely involved in responses to residents' concerns or complaints (Batchelor et al. 2020).

3.0 Research approach

This chapter describes the research approach used to investigate the abuse of older people as indicated by personal offences recorded by the police and applications for DVO. It outlines key research questions, describes the data and methods used by the research project and summarises how key concepts were operationalised. Information on the limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of project findings is also provided.

3.1. Key research questions

Several research questions were examined by the project:

1. What is the volume of personal crime victimisation experienced by older victims and has this changed over time?
2. What are the characteristics of personal crime victimisation experienced by older victims (in relation to the most serious offence (MSO) involved and relationship context)?
3. What is the demographic profile of older victims and those who offend against them (age and gender)?
4. How do the characteristics of personal crime victimisation involving older victims differ according to the demographic profile of the victim (in relation to offender age and gender, as well as relationship context and MSO)?
5. What is the volume of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved and has this changed over time?
6. What are the characteristics of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved (in relation to lodgement source and relationship context)?
7. What is the demographic profile of older people who were the aggrieved on DVO applications and the respondent (age and gender)?
8. How do the characteristics of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved differ according to the demographic profile of the aggrieved (in relation to respondent age and gender; as well as relationship context and lodgement source)?

3.2. Data sources

This project used data obtained from QPS and DJAG to examine abuse of older people in Queensland. This section provides information on the datasets used for the project, including a brief description of their contents and source.

3.2.1. Recorded offences data

Administrative data were sourced from QPS to address research questions 1 through 4 relating to personal crime victimisation experienced by older people in Queensland. These data were extracted from the Queensland Police Records and Information Management Exchange (QPRIME) and relate to alleged offences recorded (reported to or detected by police) between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2021 (the observation period). Recorded offences data contain information about criminal offences and associated victims and offenders, including when offences occurred, and the relationship between victims and offenders.²⁰

Information about offenders is only available after police action has been taken against an individual, therefore, when performing analyses concerning offender characteristics, only offences actioned by police were used.²¹ Further, while offender information in the recorded offences data is available for actioned offences of all types, victim information is limited to personal offences which restricted the types of offences that could be included in analyses to personal offences only. Personal offences (elsewhere referred to as 'offences against the person') include acts that cause, or tend to cause, death, danger to life, bodily harm, or apprehension of harm to another person. These offences include homicide (murder), other homicide (such as driving causing death), sexual offences, robbery, assault, and other offences against the person (such as stalking, kidnapping and abduction).

²⁰ The relationship between victims and offenders is based on the victim's perception of their relationship to the offender at the time of recording.

²¹ The project is based on alleged offending as not all offences reported to or actioned by police are proven in a court of law. Offences are considered actioned if an offender has been identified and subsequently proceeded against by police, for example through arrest, summons, warrant, caution, or restorative justice conference.



3.2.2. DVO applications data

Administrative data were sourced from DJAG to address research questions 5 through 8 relating to DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved in Queensland. These data were extracted from the Queensland Wide Inter-linked Courts system and relate to DVO applications lodged with a Queensland court between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2021. These data include information relating to the respondent and aggrieved listed on the application, the application lodgement date and type, and lodgement source.²²

3.3. Definitions and measurement of key concepts

This section discusses how key concepts were defined and measured by the project in order to address key research questions relating to the volume and characteristics of abuse of older Queenslanders using police and court data.

3.3.1. Abuse of older people

The conceptualisation of abuse of older people used for this project was guided by the definition developed by the AIFS for the Elder Abuse National Research Program (see section 2.1.1 for further information regarding this definition). That is, abuse of older people was conceptualised as being any act or omission that could reasonably be considered to result in harm or distress to an older person, provided such acts or omissions occurred in the context of a relationship in which there exists a power imbalance or an expectation of trust (Kaspiew et al. 2019).

3.3.2. Older person

For the purposes of this project, the concept of an older person (victim or aggrieved) was operationalised differently for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people. An older Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person was considered to be one aged 50 years or older, whereas older non-Indigenous people were considered to be those aged 65 years or older. The use of different age cut-offs reflects the earlier onset of age-related health problems and the lower life expectancy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples compared with non-Indigenous people, and is consistent with approaches used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2019) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2019; 2021a).

3.3.3. Younger person

To assist in determining if changes observed for older people merely reflected broader trends, information relating to older people was sometimes compared with that relating to younger people. Younger people were defined as those aged under 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those aged under 65 years for non-Indigenous people.

3.3.4. Victimization

For this project, a victimisation was defined as an incident during which one or more personal offences were committed against a unique individual (victim) on a given day. Where more than one offence was committed against a victim on a given day, the MSO associated with the incident was selected.²³ Where an individual was victimised more than once, or by more than one offender on a given day, information used for analysis relates to the MSO.

3.3.5. Known person

When examining victimisations within police data, the abuse of an older person was operationalised as personal crime victimisations perpetrated by a 'known person' against an older person. This then excluded victimisations involving strangers and included victimisations involving people who were in a family, intimate, social or professional relationship with an older victim.

²² Lodgement sources include police, the aggrieved, authorised persons for the aggrieved (e.g. adult guardian, child or other relative), and court.

²³ The MSO was determined using the National Offence Index developed by the ABS (2018).



3.3.6. DVO application

For the purpose of this project, a DVO application was considered to be an initiating DVO application, with applications for temporary protection orders or applications to vary an existing order excluded from analyses. The types of applications considered to represent an initiating DVO application included:

- applications for DVO, whether lodged by police or privately
- applications to register interstate or international protection orders in Queensland²⁴
- police protection notices, as these are taken to be an application for a DVO.²⁵

To analyse the lodgement source of DVO applications, applicant types were collapsed into categories of 'police' or 'private' (which includes those lodged by the aggrieved, their relatives, and authorised persons for the aggrieved, such as a child or personal associate).²⁶ DVO applications may relate to family, intimate or informal care relationships.²⁷

3.4. Data analysis

The project used descriptive statistics to explore the volume and characteristics of victimisations and DVO applications associated with older people between 2008–09 and 2020–21. Counts, proportions and rates form the basis of statistics developed to describe trends across the observation period and examine differences between demographic groups. When calculating rates (per 100,000 persons), or proportions relative to the relevant underlying population, estimated resident population (ERP) from the ABS (2019b; 2021) by age, sex and Indigenous status were used.²⁸ For overall changes, comparisons were typically made between findings for the 2008–09 and 2020–21 financial years.

3.5. Limitations

Project findings are subject to limitations that should be considered in their interpretation. The key limitations are outlined below.

3.5.1. General limitations

- The administrative data used for the project relate to a subset of older Queenslanders experiencing abuse. This is because help-seeking by older people experiencing abuse is low, particularly for some types of abuse and for some groups of older people such as those with impaired capacity or those residing in aged care (ALRC 2017a; Qu et al. 2021).
- Data relating to the trends and characteristics of recorded offences and DVO applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are subject to underlying changes in the way Indigenous status is recorded, as well as changes in the self-identification of individuals with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage across time.
- Other studies (for example Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021; Qu et al. 2021; Spike 2015) indicate that factors relating to the socio-economic status, family structure, financial arrangements and health status of those involved in the abuse of older people are important for understanding the contexts in which this abuse occurs. However, this type of information was not available in the data sourced for the project, as administrative data generally reflects information captured for operational, rather than research purposes.

²⁴ Applications to register interstate or international protection orders comprised only 0.1% of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved, and 0.3% of DVO applications associated with younger people as the aggrieved across the observation period.

²⁵ Police protection notices offer interim protection for an aggrieved and named persons while the application they are taken to represent is being processed. Between 2017–18 and 2020–21, police protection notices accounted for 74.7% of all initiating applications lodged by police, compared with 2.5% between 2008–09 and 2016–17.

²⁶ All DVO applications lodged by a lawyer acting for a child, a court, or a person acting under powers conferred by the *Powers of Attorney Act 1998* (Qld), the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* (Qld) or another act were excluded from analyses. Over the whole observation period 0.4% of DVO applications were not lodged privately or by police.

²⁷ Informal care relationships were not examined in this report as they accounted for too small a proportion of DVO applications (0.3%).

²⁸ Single year of age population estimates for Queensland are sourced from ABS (2021), National, state and territory population (Qld), September 2020. Single year of age population estimates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were obtained from unpublished data from ABS (2019b), Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 to 2031.



- While intimate, family, social and professional relationship types in line with the definition of abuse of older people have been examined in this project (see section 3.3.5), it is not possible to know in all cases whether a relationship of trust or a power imbalance existed.
- There are limitations associated with using age as the only criteria to define 'older people' given the variability of ageing and associated vulnerabilities to abuse. It is acknowledged that experiences of ageing in the community are diverse and vulnerabilities to abuse are not inherent in people over a certain age.

3.5.2. Limitations of recorded crime data

- Not all acts that constitute abuse of older people are defined as a criminal offence by law, and not all offences recorded by police result in an offender being actioned.
- Recorded offences data include a period of time (March 2020 to June 2021) in which social containment measures were implemented and policing priorities changed to control the spread of COVID-19 which may have impacted levels of detected and recorded crime during this time.
- The relationship types recorded in QPRIME may not adequately capture kinship relationships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which are understood as a form of family relationship.
- Given only personal offences have information on victim and offender demographics and relationship types in police administrative data, related analyses were only able to examine personal offences associated with apparent abuse of older people. Therefore, other criminal offences that may be considered to constitute abuse of older people, such as theft and fraud, were not examined by the project. Offences associated with breaches of DVO were also not able to be examined directly.
- The recording of personal offences in police data is impacted by offence recording practices. Prior to 1 July 2021, personal offences (particularly assaults) were not necessarily recorded by police in circumstances where a victim did not support prosecution. This would contribute to an undercount of personal offences coming to the attention of police during the observation period.

3.5.3. Limitations of DVO applications data

- Analyses relating to DVO applications presented in this report may undercount the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples involved in DVO applications. This is because there is variation in a person's willingness to provide information regarding their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity, and applications can be lodged by people other than those named on an application, in which case Indigenous status may not be recorded.
- Not all DVO applications result in the imposition of a DVO. A DVO application will not result in a DVO if the application is withdrawn, or the court is not satisfied that it is more likely than not that the respondent has committed DFV against the aggrieved, or because an application is deemed to be frivolous or otherwise unfounded.
- Analyses relating to family relationships (where one person is a relative of the other) are unable to be further broken down by specific relationship types (such as sibling, child, or grandchild) as this level of detail was not readily available in the courts data.²⁹ This data limitation has impacted the types of analyses that were able to be performed with regard to the relationship contexts associated with apparent abuse of older people.
- DVO applications data collected and stored for administrative purposes do not include information on the type of abuse that resulted in a DVO application being made.

²⁹ Family relationships, besides those relating to people connected by blood or marriage, also include those where individuals regard themselves as relatives of each other in a wider concept than is ordinarily understood, for example, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

4.0 Personal crime victimisation experienced by older people

This chapter presents information on the volume and characteristics of personal crime victimisation involving older victims, based on analyses of personal offences recorded by Queensland police between 2008–09 and 2020–21. The following research questions are addressed in this chapter:

- What is the volume of personal crime victimisation experienced by older victims and has this changed over time?
- What are the characteristics of personal crime victimisation experienced by older victims (in relation to the MSO involved and the relationship context)?
- What is the demographic profile of older victims and those who offend against them (age and gender)?
- How do the characteristics of personal crime victimisation involving older victims differ according to the demographic profile of the victim (in relation to offender age and gender; as well as the relationship context and MSO)?

Research findings are presented by victim Indigeneity given different age cut-offs were used by the project to identify older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 50 years or older) and older non-Indigenous people (aged 65 years or older) (see section 3.3 for more information). The results relate to counts of victimisations, rather than counts of unique people who have been victimised, therefore the same person may be counted multiple times if they were victimised on separate days.

Overall, the results show increases in the volume and prevalence of recorded personal crime victimisation among older Queenslanders and differences in the nature of victimisation across different victim demographic groups. These results are discussed in more detail below.

Key terms used in this chapter

- **Victimisation:** an incident where a person is a victim of personal crime on a given day, regardless of the number of offences that are alleged to have occurred. Experiences of property or other types of offences are not included.
- **Older people:** those aged 50 years or older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those aged 65 years or older for non-Indigenous people.
- **Younger people:** those aged under 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those aged under 65 years for non-Indigenous people.
- **Known person:** a person who is known to the victim in a family, intimate, social, or professional relationship.

4.1. Volume and characteristics of personal crime victimisations involving older victims

This section begins by providing insight into the prevalence and nature of abuse of older as indicated by analysis of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons against older people. This includes information on the types of personal offences taking place and the relationship contexts in which the abuse occurs.

4.1.1. Older victims are underrepresented among personal crime victimisations

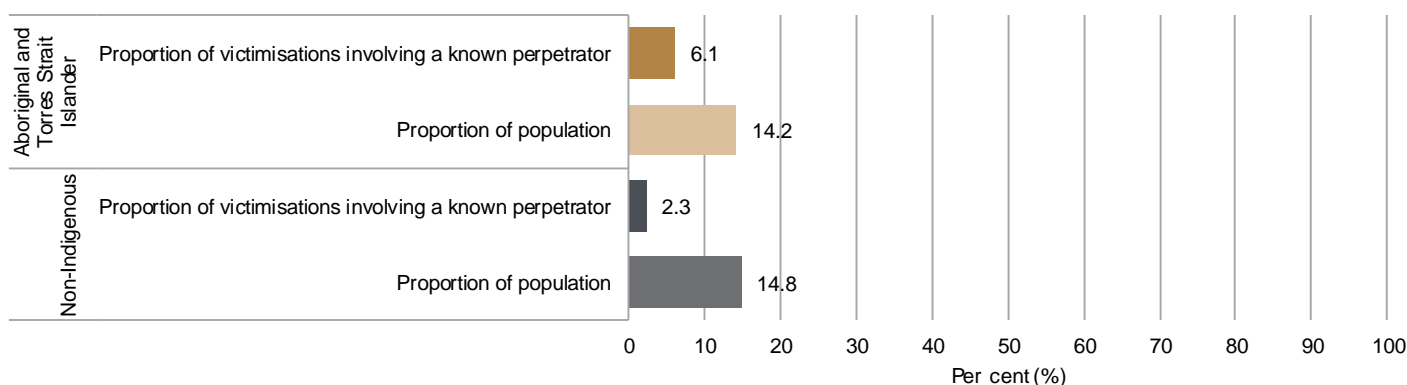
The project involved excluding personal crime victimisations perpetrated by strangers or where the relationship context was unknown from analyses exploring the abuse of older people as indicated by personal crime victimisations recorded by police.³⁰ Readers are reminded that the abuse of older people includes actions that are not captured by police administrative data (such as financial and emotional abuse).

³⁰ Over the observation period, personal crime victimisations that indicated abuse of older people as conceptualised by the project (i.e. abuse involving known perpetrators) accounted for 71.4% of all victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim, and 45.4% of all victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim. Less than one in five (15.5%) victimisations experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims were perpetrated by a stranger, while the relationship between victim and offender was unknown in 13.1% of victimisations. For victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims over this period, stranger relationships accounted for 38.7% while unknown relationships accounted for 15.9%.

Figure 1 shows that the proportion of personal crime victimisations involving a known person experienced by both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people during the observation period was smaller than their representation in their respective population groups. For example, people aged 50 years or older accounted for 14.2% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population compared with 6.1% of personal crime victimisations ($n = 3,232$) involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims, while people aged 65 years or older accounted for 14.8% of the non-Indigenous population and 2.3% of personal crime victimisations ($n = 7,856$) involving non-Indigenous victims.

While findings show that older people are underrepresented among victimisations relative to their representation in the general population, further analyses found that the number and rate of victimisations involving older victims has grown over time. This is discussed next.

Figure 1 Representation of older people among personal crime victimisations and in the general Queensland population, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

4.1.2. Personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons has increased for both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people

Figure 2 shows that, despite some fluctuation, there was a general upward trend across the observation period in the number and rate of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons against older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples. When comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21 for victimisations involving older victims and a known person:

- the number involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims increased from 94 to 309 (+228.7%)
- the rate involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims increased from 434 to 765 per 100,000 persons (+76.1%)
- the number involving non-Indigenous victims increased from 158 to 501 (+217.1%)
- the rate involving non-Indigenous victims increased from 30 to 60 per 100,000 persons (+97.7%).

Increases were particularly notable from 2015–16, although overall growth between 2015–16 and 2020–21 was higher for victimisations involving older non-Indigenous people (+80.1%) than older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (+36.2%).

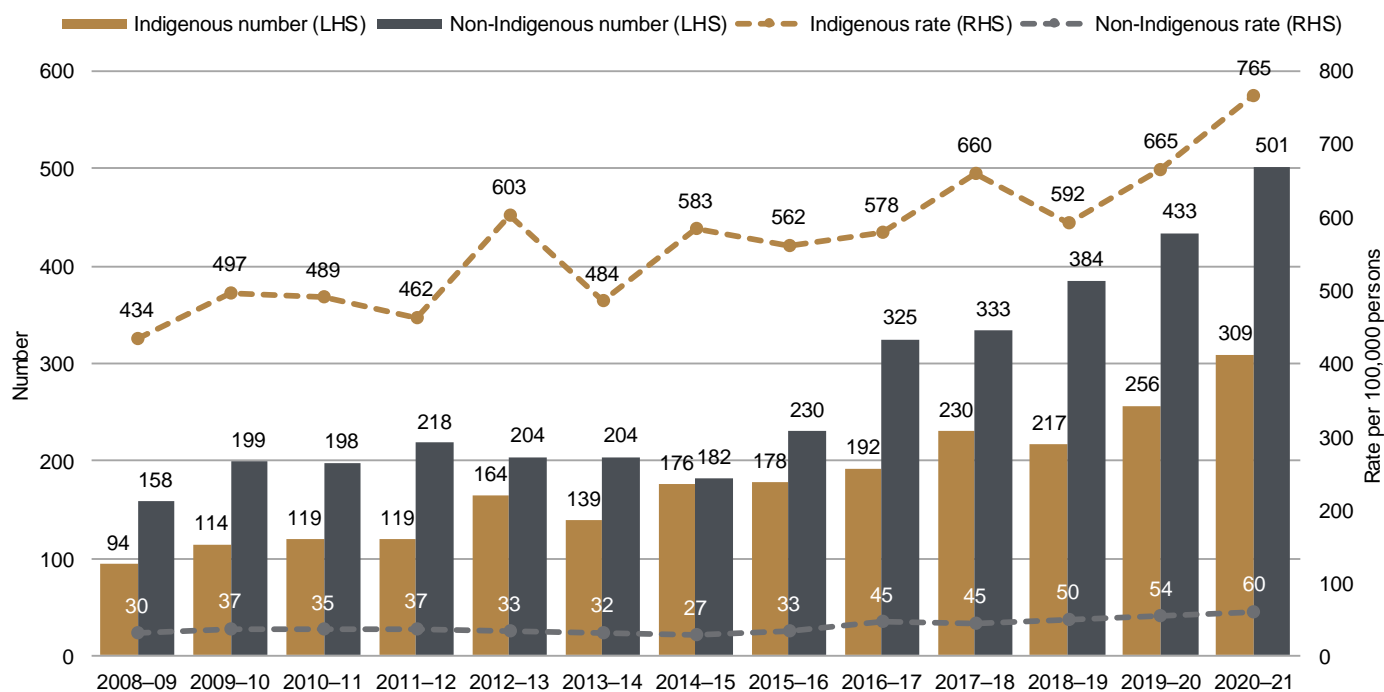
When comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21 for victimisations involving younger victims and a known person (data not shown):

- the rate involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (aged under 50 years) increased from 1,523 to 1,572 per 100,000 persons (+3.2%)
- the rate involving non-Indigenous victims (aged under 65 years) increased from 294 to 337 per 100,000 persons (+14.7%) (see Table A1 and Figure A1 in Appendix A for more information on changes in victimisations involving younger victims).

These findings illustrate that, while the prevalence of victimisation among older people remains considerably lower when compared with younger people, there has been a larger relative increase in the rate of older people experiencing victimisation by a known person compared with younger people.

It is also apparent in Figure 2 that the rate of victimisation perpetrated by a known person was substantially higher among older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared with older non-Indigenous people. For example, in 2020–21 the rate for victimisations of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by a known person was 12.8 times higher than that for older non-Indigenous people (765 compared with 60 per 100,000 persons).

Figure 2 Number and rate of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons against older victims



LHS = left hand side RHS = right hand side

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

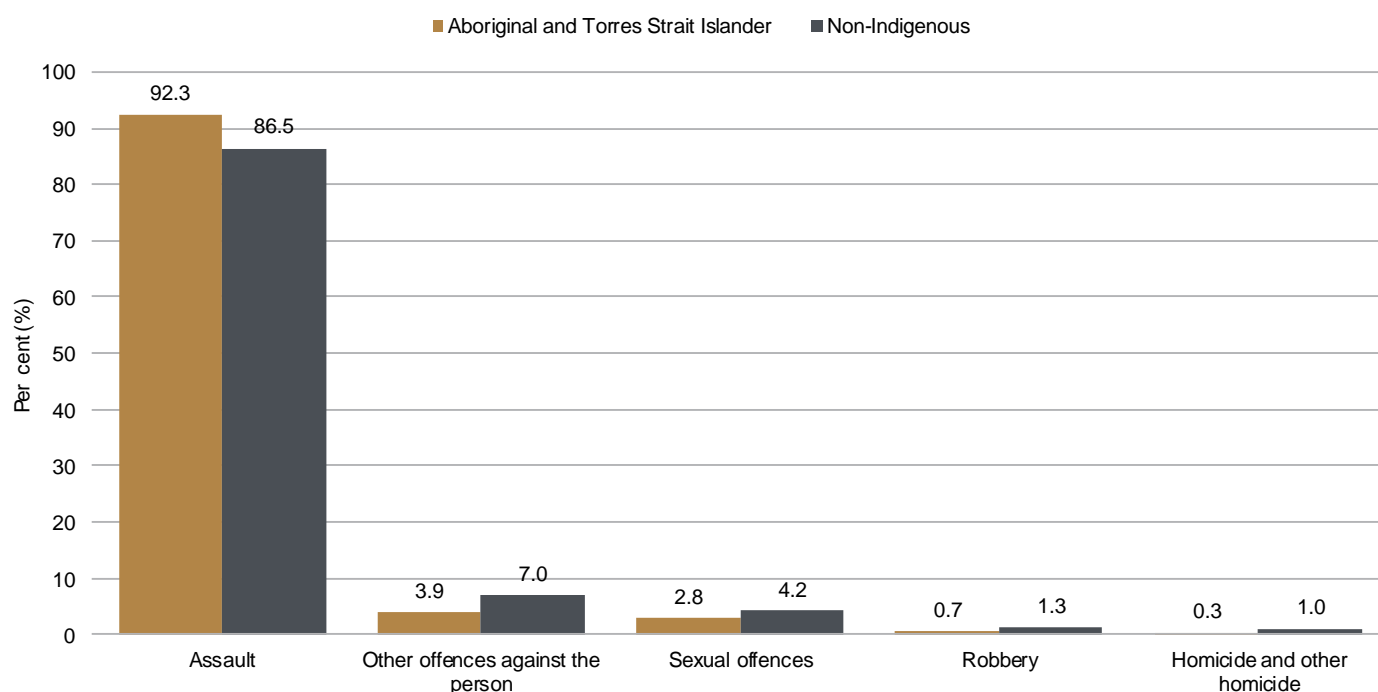
4.1.3. Assault is the most common type of personal offence experienced by older people

Figure 3 shows that for personal crime victimisations against older people that were perpetrated by a known person, assault was the most common MSO for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (92.3%) and non-Indigenous (86.5%) victims.^{31, 32} The remaining personal offence categories each accounted for a relatively small proportion of victimisations involving older victims and a known person, with other offences against the person and sexual offences slightly more common where the victim was non-Indigenous compared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims. Assault was also the most common MSO when examining victimisations of younger people by a known person, however sexual offences were found to be more prevalent among younger victims compared with older victims (data not shown). For example, 17.8% of victimisations involving a younger non-Indigenous victim included a sexual offence as the MSO, compared with 4.2% for older non-Indigenous victims. Further information on MSO for victimisations involving younger victims is provided in Figure A2 in Appendix A.

³¹ While a victimisation event may include several different offences, in this project, only the MSO is counted (see section 3.3.4 for more information).

³² Trended analysis over the observation period showed generally stable proportions in the MSO for victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims, although there was an increase in the proportion of assault offences for non-Indigenous older victims from 80.4% in 2008–09 to 90.2% in 2020–21 (data not shown).

Figure 3 Distribution of personal crime victimisations involving older victims perpetrated by known persons by MSO, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

4.1.4. Personal crime victimisations committed by a known person most commonly occur in the context of social and family relationships

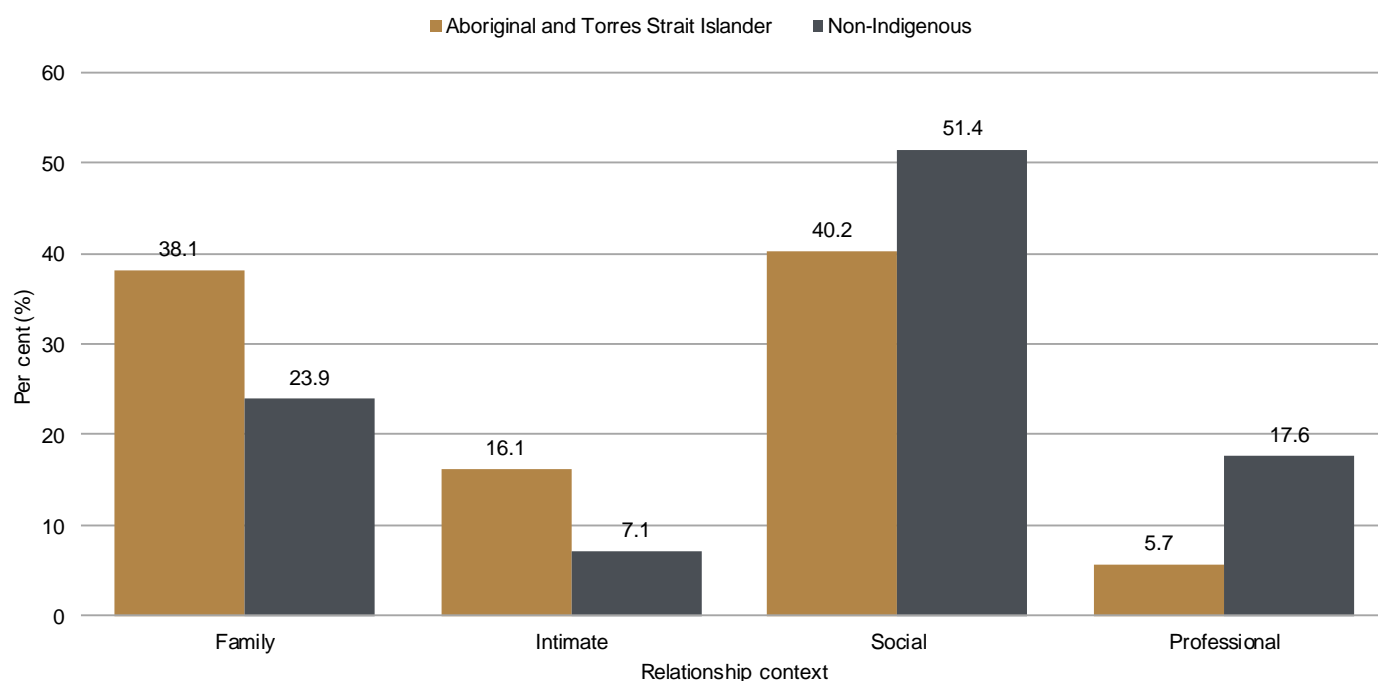
Figure 4 plots the proportion of personal crime victimisations for the observation period by the relationship between the victim and perpetrator (family, intimate, social, or professional relationship). The results show that a social relationship was the most common context of victimisations, however victimisations involving social relationships were more commonly experienced by older non-Indigenous victims (51.4%) than older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (40.2%). Victimisations involving family and intimate relationship contexts were more common among older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (38.1% family and 16.1% intimate) than older non-Indigenous victims (23.9% family and 7.1% intimate), and a larger share of victimisations experienced by older non-Indigenous victims (17.6%) occurred in a professional setting than those experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (5.7%).

When comparing these findings about relationship contexts with victimisations of younger victims, victimisations perpetrated by a known person more often involved an intimate relationship for younger victims, regardless of the Indigenous status of the victim (data not shown). More information on relationship context for victimisations involving younger victims is provided in Figure A3 in Appendix A.

The overall trends in the types of relationships involved in victimisations associated with older victims changed somewhat over the observation period (data not shown). Despite some fluctuation, there was a clear increase in the proportion involving family and intimate relationships and a decreasing proportion involving social and professional relationships, particularly among those relating to non-Indigenous victims. For example, when comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21, the proportion of victimisations accounted for by family and intimate relationships for older non-Indigenous victims increased from 13.9% to 26.5% and 2.5% to 10.4% respectively. This increase was most notable from 2015–16 onwards for victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims when overall trends also began to increase more steeply (see section 4.1.2). More information on changes in relationship context over the observation period is presented in Figure A4 in Appendix A.

The next section more closely examines the demographic profile of older victims and the offenders involved in the abuse of older people. It also explores differences in the nature of personal crime victimisation for each victim demographic group.

Figure 4 Distribution of personal crime victimisations involving older victims perpetrated by known persons and relationship context, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

Summary: Volume and characteristics of personal crime victimisations involving an older victim

- Victimisations involving older victims account for a relatively small proportion of all victimisations, although this has increased over time.
- Known persons perpetrate around 7 in 10 victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and almost half of victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim.
- The rate of victimisations perpetrated by known persons has increased over time for both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people, particularly in more recent years for non-Indigenous people.
- The most common MSO within victimisations perpetrated by a known person and an older victim is assault.
- While social and family relationships account for most victimisations for both groups, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are more likely to be in a family or intimate relationship with the offender, compared with older non-Indigenous victims who are more often in social and professional relationships.

4.2. Profile of victims and offenders involved in personal crime victimisations committed by a known person

This section expands on the previous section, by providing demographic information on both victims and offenders involved in personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons. Variation in the relationship contexts of victimisations by the demographic profile of victims is also explored. Readers are reminded that the results below are based on counts of victimisations, rather than counts of unique people who have been victimised, therefore the same person may be counted multiple times if they were victimised on separate days. Offenders may also be counted multiple times if they are identified as the perpetrator in multiple victimisation events.

4.2.1. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are most often female, while older non-Indigenous victims are most often male, with offenders most often male for both groups

Figure 5 provides the gender breakdown of victims and offenders for personal crime victimisations perpetrated by a known person against older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people. The results show that females represented 59.6% of victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims compared with 41.5% of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims. Unlike victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (where females were more common than males), male victims (58.5%) were more common than female victims (41.5%) among victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims.³³ Although there was some fluctuation, the gender breakdown of older victims was broadly stable across the observation period (data not shown).

Figure 5 also shows the majority of offenders were male, although this was more common for victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims (76.1%) compared with those involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (67.9%). More information on changes in victim and offender gender over the observation period is presented in Figure A6 and Figure A7 in Appendix A.

The gender profile of older victims involved in victimisations was different to that apparent for younger victims. Most notably, victims were more often female for victimisations involving both younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (72.7%) and non-Indigenous (56.4%) victims (data not shown).

Observed variation in the gender profile of victimisations involving older people relating to Indigenous status may relate to the differences in the relationship context of victimisations, with a higher proportion of victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims occurring in the context of intimate and family relationships, compared with older non-Indigenous victims where there was a higher proportion of social relationships (see section 4.1.4). This is explored further in section 4.2.3. Before this, the overall gender and age group breakdowns of victims and offenders are provided.

Figure 5 Gender of victims and offenders for personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Notes:

1. The gender of the offender was not recorded for 674 (29.2%) victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and 1,534 (43.0%) victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim and have been excluded from calculations. This is because offender information is only recorded once an offender is actioned for an offence.
2. The gender of the victim was missing from one victimisation (0.0%) involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and two victimisations (0.1%) involving an older non-Indigenous victim and have been excluded from calculations.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

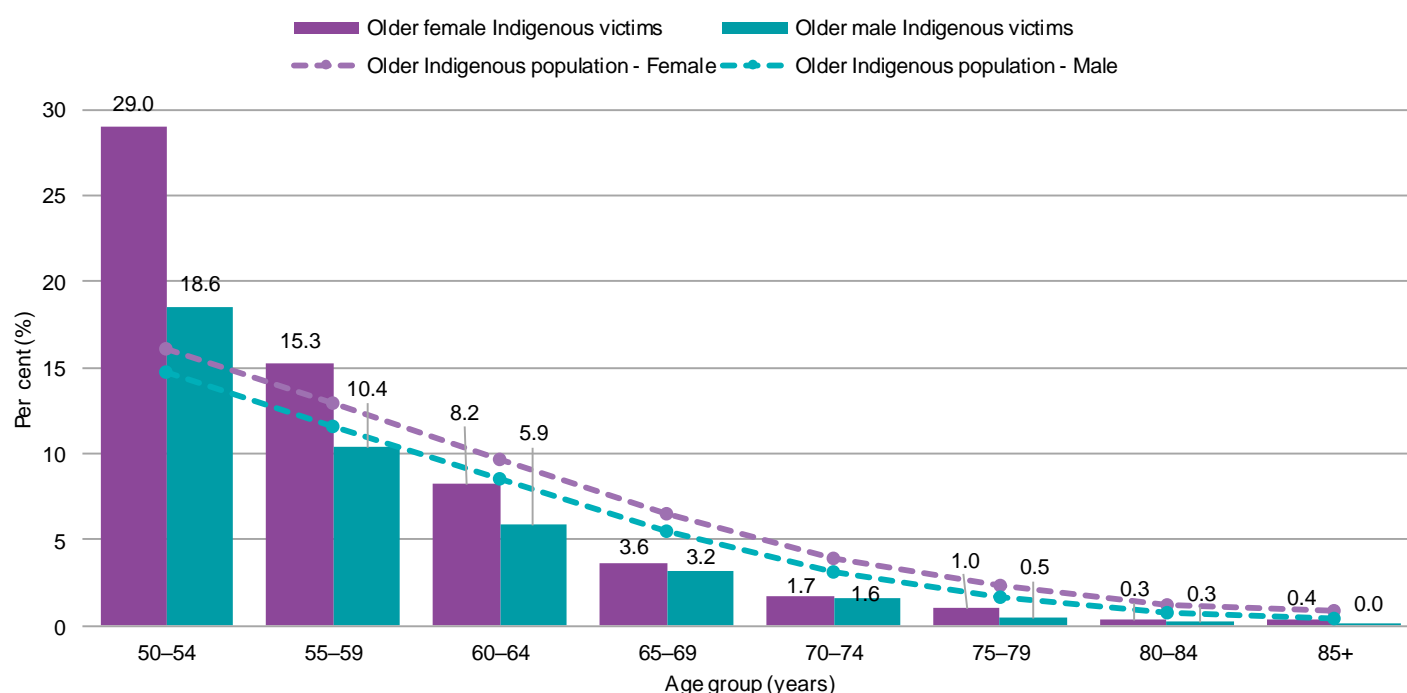
³³ When considering these findings with regard to the gender composition of older people in the community by Indigenous status, females accounted for a larger proportion of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims than they do in the community (53.6% of the older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population compared with 59.6% of victims) while males accounted for a larger proportion of older non-Indigenous victims than they do in the community (47.4% of the older non-Indigenous population compared with 58.5% of victims).

4.2.2. Prevalence of personal crime victimisation decreases with age, and the abuse of older people is often intergenerational

Figure 6 and Figure 7 provide a proportional breakdown of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons by victim gender and age group (shown by the bars) compared with the corresponding proportions in the respective older population (shown by the dashed lines), for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people respectively. Readers are reminded that different age cut-offs have been used in this project to identify older people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years or older and non-Indigenous people aged 65 years or older).

The proportion of victimisations experienced by each group decreases with age among victimisations involving both female and male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims, with older victims aged 50–54 years accounting for a larger proportion of victims relative to their proportion in the underlying population of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Figure 6). That is, close to half (47.6%) of victimisations of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved those aged 50–54 years, while this age group represented 30.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over. Females accounted for a substantially larger proportion of victimisations experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50–54 years (29.0% of victims and 16.1% of the older population) than that experienced by males (18.6% of victims and 14.7% of the older population). These results suggest that the larger proportion of females among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (as shown in section 4.2.1) is largely attributable to females aged 50–54 years, although females accounted for the majority of victims in every age group from 50 years or older.

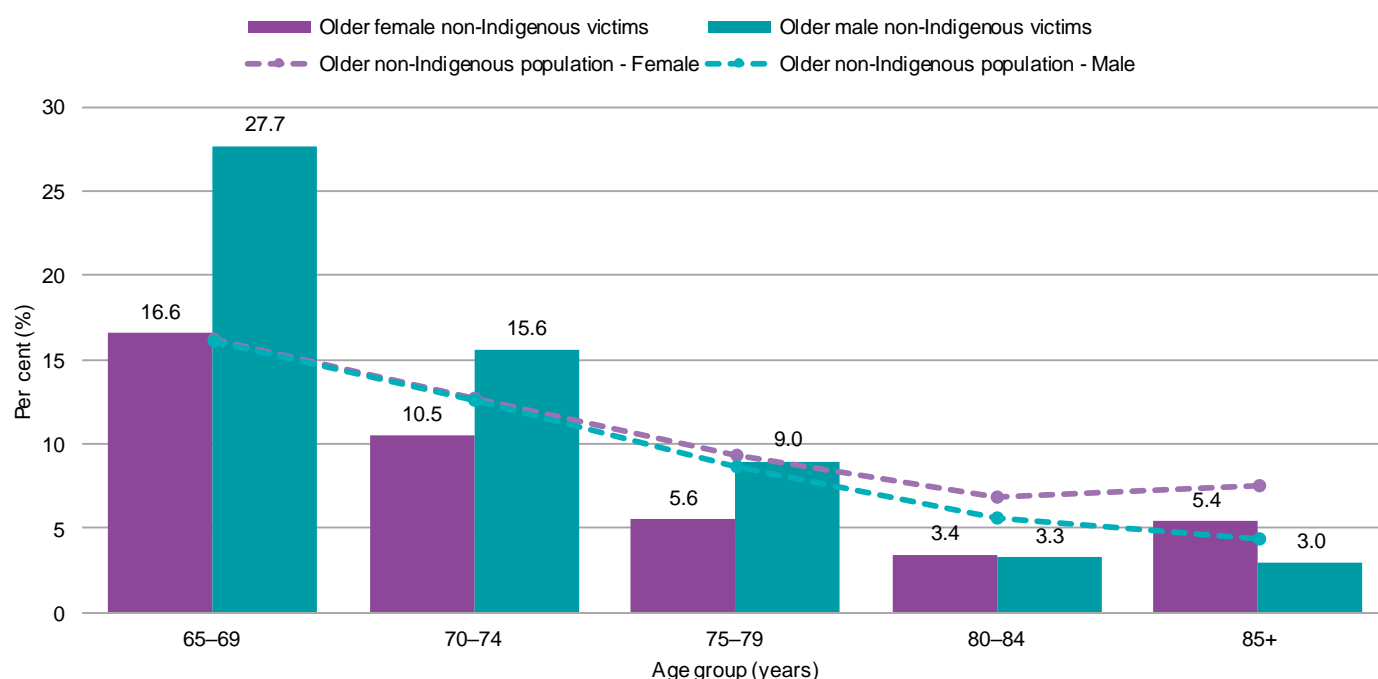
Figure 6 Distribution of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims by gender and age group, 2008–09 to 2020–21



- Notes:
1. Proportions relate to percentage of total victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and the total older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 50 years or older.
 2. One victimisation record was missing victim gender information and was excluded from calculations.
- Source: QGSO analysis of QPS and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

Figure 7 shows a similar pattern for non-Indigenous victims although with an inverse pattern with respect to gender, with male victims accounting for a larger proportion of victims in most age groups from 65 years or older. This is particularly notable for male victims aged 65–69 years who accounted for 27.7% of victimisations, compared with 16.2% of the older non-Indigenous population while female victims in the same age group accounted for 16.6% of victimisations and 16.2% of the older non-Indigenous population. The proportion of victimisations each older age group accounted for typically decreased in a similar manner for both females and males. The exception to this was a slight increase for females aged 85 years and over who accounted for the majority of victimisations in that age group, largely in line with their relatively larger representation within the older population. These results show that the larger representation of males among older non-Indigenous victims (as shown in section 4.2.1) is primarily attributable to males aged 65–69 years.

Figure 7 Distribution of personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons involving older non-Indigenous older victims by gender and age group, 2008–09 to 2020–21



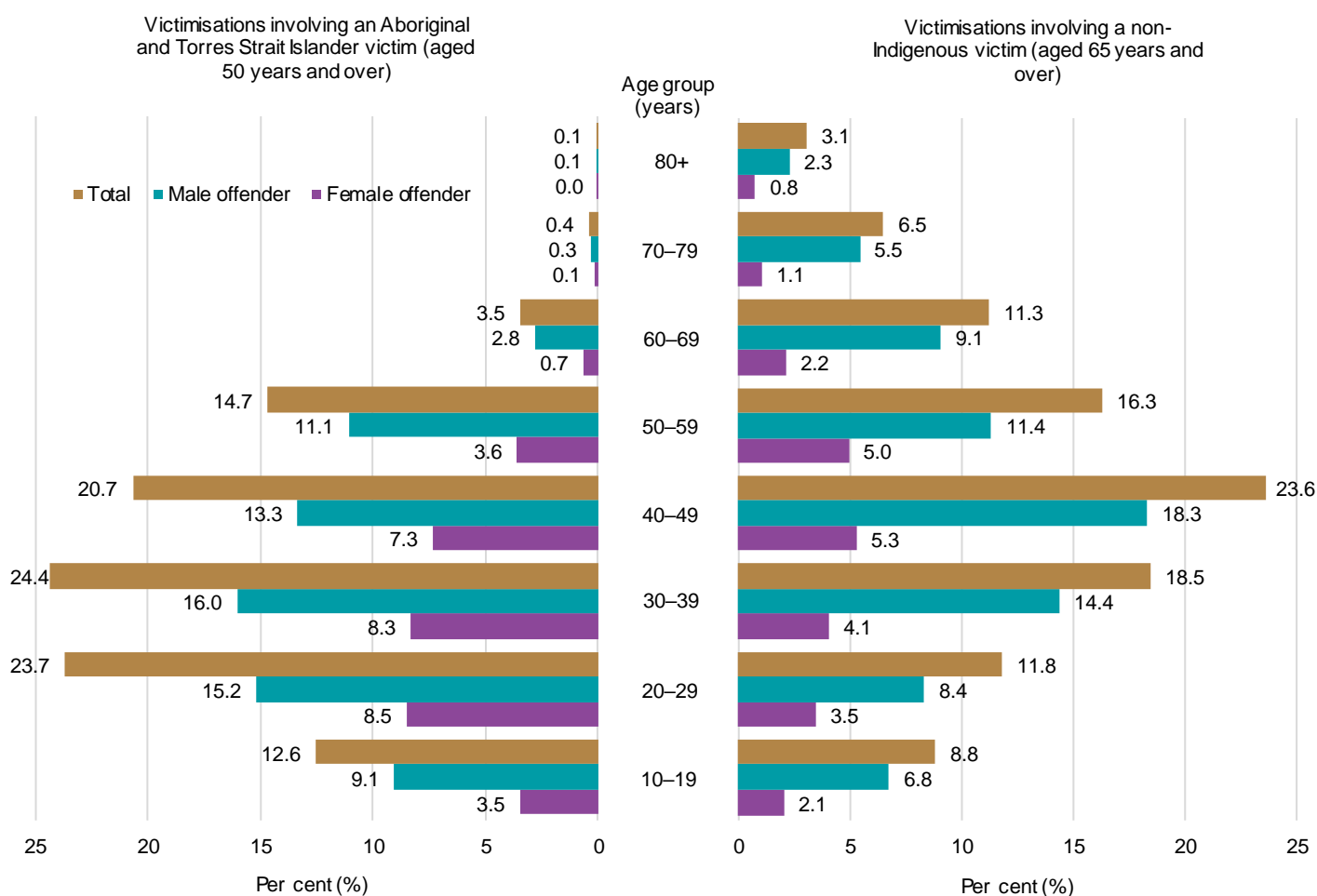
- Notes:
1. Proportions relate to percentage of total victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim and the total older non-Indigenous population aged 65 years or older.
 2. Two victimisations were missing victim gender information and were excluded from calculations.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

Offenders perpetrating personal crime offences against older people are often younger than their victims. Figure 8 provides information on the age group and gender of offenders known to the victim involved in personal crime victimisations against older people, by Indigenous status of the older victim. It shows that the age distribution of female and male offenders was broadly similar, and that offenders were typically much younger than victims for victimisations involving either older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or non-Indigenous victims. Further, as is also apparent in section 4.2.1, males accounted for the majority of offenders and this is consistent across all offender age groups.

Victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim (aged 50 years or older) were most likely to be perpetrated by an offender aged 30–39 years (24.4% of victimisations), closely followed by an offender aged 20–29 years (23.7% of victimisations). For victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim (aged 65 years or older), the offender age groups which accounted for the largest proportions of victimisations were 40–49 years (23.6% of victimisations), followed by 30–39 years (18.5% of victimisations). These results suggest that offenders tended to be substantially younger than victims of older person abuse, as indicated by personal crime victimisations on average. This is explored further below.

Figure 8 Distribution of personal crime victimisations of older people by an offender known to them by offender age group and gender, 2008–09 to 2020–21



- Notes:
1. Proportions for each offender gender and age group relate to percentage of total victimisations for each victim group. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.
 2. The gender of the offender was not recorded for 674 (29.2%) victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and 1,534 (43.0%) victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim and have been excluded from calculations. This is because offender information is only recorded once an offender is actioned for an offence.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

The intergenerational nature of abuse of older people is particularly apparent when observing differences between the average age of victims and offenders (see Figure 9). About 20 years separated the average age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and perpetrators of personal crime victimisations against older people, while a difference of nearly 30 years was observed between the average age of non-Indigenous victims and offenders. The disparity in average age differences between victims and offenders may relate to the relationship contexts in which victimisations occur. This is explored further in the next section which examines how offender gender and average age vary for each victim demographic group, and by relationship context.

Figure 9 Average age of victims and offenders for personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Note: The differences between the average ages of victims and offenders were calculated using unrounded values.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

4.2.3. Offender demographics and relationship context varies for personal crime victimisations involving different victim demographic groups

Figure 10 summarises information for victimisations involving each older victim demographic group with regard to the average age of victims, the average age and gender of offenders, the relationship contexts involved in victimisations, and how offender age and gender vary according to the relationship context.

The key points for **victimisations involving each victim demographic group** include:

- Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were most often victimised by a family member (41.3%), these family members were mostly male for both victimisations perpetrated by the children of victims (61.3% of offenders with an average age of 30.4 years) and other relatives (53.5% of offenders with an average age of 31.4 years).
- Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were most often victimised in a social relationship (49.8%) by males (86.9% of offenders) with an average age of 36.3 years.
- Older non-Indigenous females were most often victimised in a social relationship (39.6%) by males (61.3% of offenders) with an average age of 52.2 years.
- Older non-Indigenous males were most often victimised in a social relationship (59.8%) by males (86.8% of offenders) with an average age of 48.2 years.

In considering these results, some **apparent differences between victim demographic groups** provide further insight into variations in the dynamics of abuse of older people in relation to gender and Indigenous status. This includes:

- Victimisations occurring in a family context more often involve a relative other than a child of the victim as the offender for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims compared with non-Indigenous victims. Further, relatives other than a child of the victim appear to be mostly intergenerational for each victim demographic group, with the average age of offenders typically several decades younger than the average victim age.
- Intimate relationships accounted for a particularly small proportion of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous males (4.4%) compared with other groups.
- Professional relationships accounted for a relatively small proportion of victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male and female victims, although they accounted for a notable proportion (larger than for intimate relationships) of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous male and female victims. In particular, one in five (20.0%) victimisations involving older non-Indigenous female victims were experienced in a professional relationship, and the majority (60.5%) of offenders were female with an average age of 46.7 years. Apart from

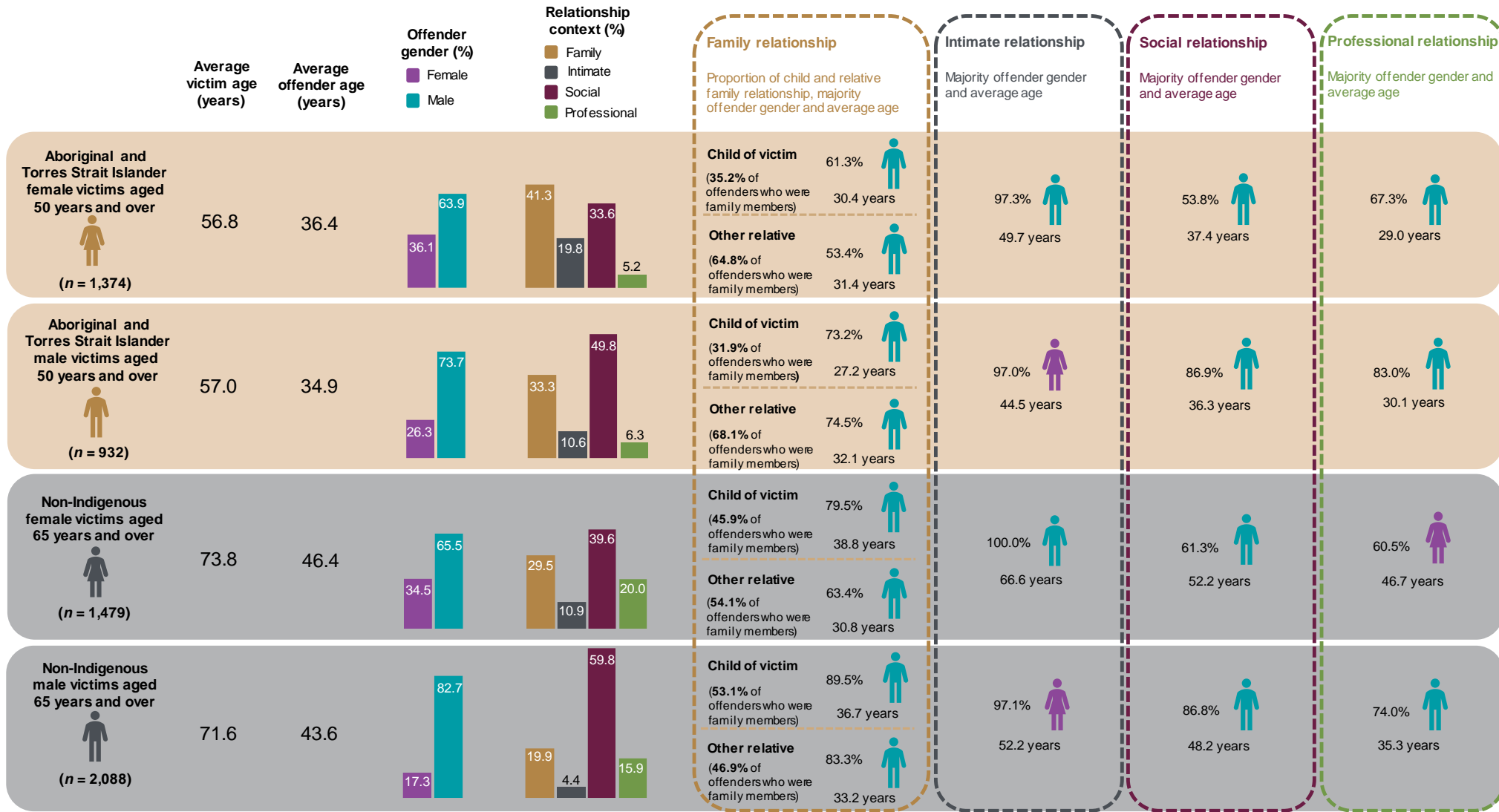


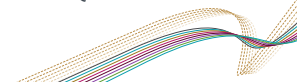
intimate relationships where the victim was male, this is the only relationship context in which a majority of offenders were female.

- Males were typically most likely to be the offender across each relationship context and victim demographic group, although female offenders accounted for a notably larger proportion of offenders for victimisations involving older female victims than victimisations involving older male victims. The contexts in which females comprised a larger proportion of all offenders included victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female victims, particularly in the context where the offender was a relative other than a child of the victim (46.6%) and social relationships (46.2%).

There was also variation in the MSO for victimisations involving different demographic groups, particularly for sexual offences (data not shown). Victimisations experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female victims (4.4%) and non-Indigenous female victims (8.5%) involved sexual offences more often than those involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (0.4%) and non-Indigenous males (1.1%). Victimisations experienced by older female victims involving a sexual offence as the MSO most often occurred in the context of social relationships for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (57.4%) and non-Indigenous (53.2%) female victims, with professional relationships also accounting for a notable proportion of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous females (38.1%). Further information on MSO for victimisations involving each victim demographic group is presented in Figure A8 in Appendix A.

Figure 10 Victim and offender profile overall and by relationship type, 2008–09 to 2020–21





Notes for Figure 10:

1. The gender of the offender was not recorded for 674 (29.2%) victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and 1,534 (43.0%) victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim and have been excluded from calculations. This is because offender information is only recorded once an offence is actioned against an offender.
2. The gender of the victim was missing from one (0.0%) victimisation involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and two (0.1%) victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim and were excluded from calculations.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

Summary: Profile of victims and offenders

- Females account for the majority of victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims while males account for the majority of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims. Offenders tend to be male for both groups.
- The prevalence of victimisation decreases with age, for both female and male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people.
- Offenders are often several decades younger than the victim, on average.
- Typical offender demographics and relationship contexts vary among different victim demographic groups. Of note:
 - The largest proportion of victimisations occur within the context of a social relationship for each victim demographic group except for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females where the largest proportion of victimisations occur within the context of a family relationship.
 - When comparing the family relationship context of victimisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims more often have a relative other than a child(ren) of the victim as the offender when compared with non-Indigenous victims. Regardless of demographics, when the offender is a relative other than a child of the victim, these relationships tend to be intergenerational in nature such as nieces or nephews, rather than intragenerational relationships such as brothers or sisters.
 - While males typically account for the majority of offenders across victim demographic groups and relationship contexts, there is a higher proportion of female offenders among victimisations involving older female victims compared with older male victims.
 - While assault is the most common MSO within victimisations for all victim demographic groups, older female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous victims are more likely to experience sexual assault (compared with older male victims) and this is most often reported as occurring in a social relationship.

5.0 Domestic violence order applications involving older people as the aggrieved

This chapter presents findings on the volume and characteristics of DVO applications in Queensland involving older people as the aggrieved, including the demographic profile of the aggrieved and respondents, and is based on analyses of court information recorded between 2008–09 and 2020–21. The following research questions are addressed in this chapter:

- What is the volume of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved and has this changed over time?
- What are the characteristics of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved (in relation to the lodgement source and relationship context)?
- What is the demographic profile of older people who were the aggrieved on DVO applications and the respondent (age and gender)?
- How do the characteristics of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved differ according to the demographic profile of the aggrieved (in relation to respondent age and gender; as well as the relationship context and lodgement source)?

Given different age cut-offs have been used in this project to identify older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (aged 50 years or older) and older non-Indigenous people (aged 65 years or older) (see section 3.3 for more information), results in this chapter are presented by the Indigenous status of the aggrieved. Findings presented relate to counts of applications, rather than a count of unique people who have been named as an aggrieved, which means that an individual may be counted multiple times if they are named as an aggrieved on multiple DVO applications.

The results show an overall increase in the volume and prevalence of DVO applications involving older aggrieved Queenslanders which peaked around 2015–16 and 2016–17, with differences in the characteristics of DVO applications apparent across different aggrieved demographic groups. Results are discussed in more detail below.

Key terms used in this chapter

- **Domestic violence order (DVO):** a civil order imposed by the court (typically a Magistrates Court) to protect people experiencing DFV. A DVO protects the aggrieved by listing various conditions that the respondent must adhere to, any breach of which is a criminal offence.
- **DVO application:** an application to a court to impose a DVO. DVO applications can be lodged by police or privately by an aggrieved person or another authorised party for the aggrieved (see section 3.3.6).
- **Aggrieved:** the primary person listed on a DVO application as requiring protection from a respondent.
- **Respondent:** a person identified on a DVO application as being the individual using domestic or family violence against the aggrieved and the individual from whom the aggrieved requires protection.
- **Older people:** those aged 50 years or older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those aged 65 years or older for non-Indigenous people.
- **Younger people:** those aged under 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those aged under 65 years for non-Indigenous people.

5.1. Volume and characteristics of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved

This section compares the share of total DVO applications involving older people with the representation of older people in the general population to contextualise subsequent information on DVO application trends. Information on the lodgement source and relationship profile of DVO applications is then provided.

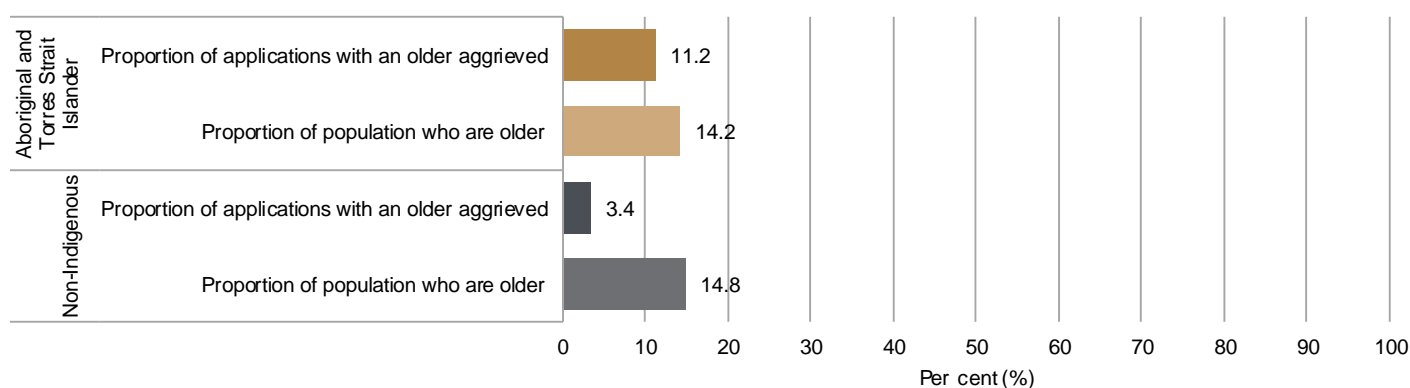
5.1.1. Older people are underrepresented as the aggrieved on DVO applications

Figure 11 shows that both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people were underrepresented as aggrieved on DVO applications during the observation period when compared to their representation among respective populations in the community. This underrepresentation was most notable for older non-Indigenous people (aged 65 years or older) who accounted for 3.4% of aggrieved ($n = 9,590$) and 14.8% of the non-Indigenous population, this compares with older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 50 years or older) who accounted for 11.2% of aggrieved ($n = 6,500$) and 14.2% of the Indigenous population.

When comparing these findings with the representation of older people among victimisations, older non-Indigenous victims accounted for a similar proportion of victimisations (2.3%) compared with their representation as aggrieved on DVO applications (3.4%). However, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for a notably larger proportion of aggrieved on DVO applications (11.2%) compared with their representation within victimisations (6.1%) (see section 4.1.1).

While these findings demonstrate how older people are underrepresented as aggrieved on DVO applications, further analyses show that the number and rate of DVO applications involving older aggrieved has changed markedly over time and these changes differ between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous aggrieved. The results of these analyses are the focus of the next section.

Figure 11 Representation of older people as the aggrieved on DVO applications and in the general Queensland population, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG and ABS (2019b; 2021) data



5.1.2. The number and rate of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved has increased

Figure 12 provides the number and rate of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved over the observation period and shows that the number and rate of DVO applications for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was substantially higher than that apparent for non-Indigenous people. For example, in 2020–21 the rate of DVO applications for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 13.3 times higher than that for older non-Indigenous people (1,649 compared with 124 per 100,000 persons). This is a similar difference to victimisations of older people, where the rate was 12.8 times higher for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2020–21 compared with older non-Indigenous people (see section 4.1.2).

Some differences in trends over time were also observed. While there was a general upward trend in the number and rate of DVO applications for both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous aggrieved until 2016–17, there was relative stability in the number of DVO applications for both groups following 2016–17, and a decline in the rate of DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while the rate involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved remained relatively stable. When comparing DVO applications involving an older aggrieved in 2008–09 with 2020–21:

- the number involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved increased from 200 to 666 (+233.0%)
- the rate involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved increased from 924 to 1,649 per 100,000 persons (+78.4%)
- the number involving non-Indigenous aggrieved increased from 367 to 1,033 (+181.5%)
- the rate involving non-Indigenous aggrieved increased from 70 to 124 per 100,000 persons (+75.5%).

In comparison, these rate increases are substantially higher than the changes observed for DVO applications involving younger people (data not shown). When comparing DVO applications involving a younger aggrieved in 2008–09 with 2020–21:

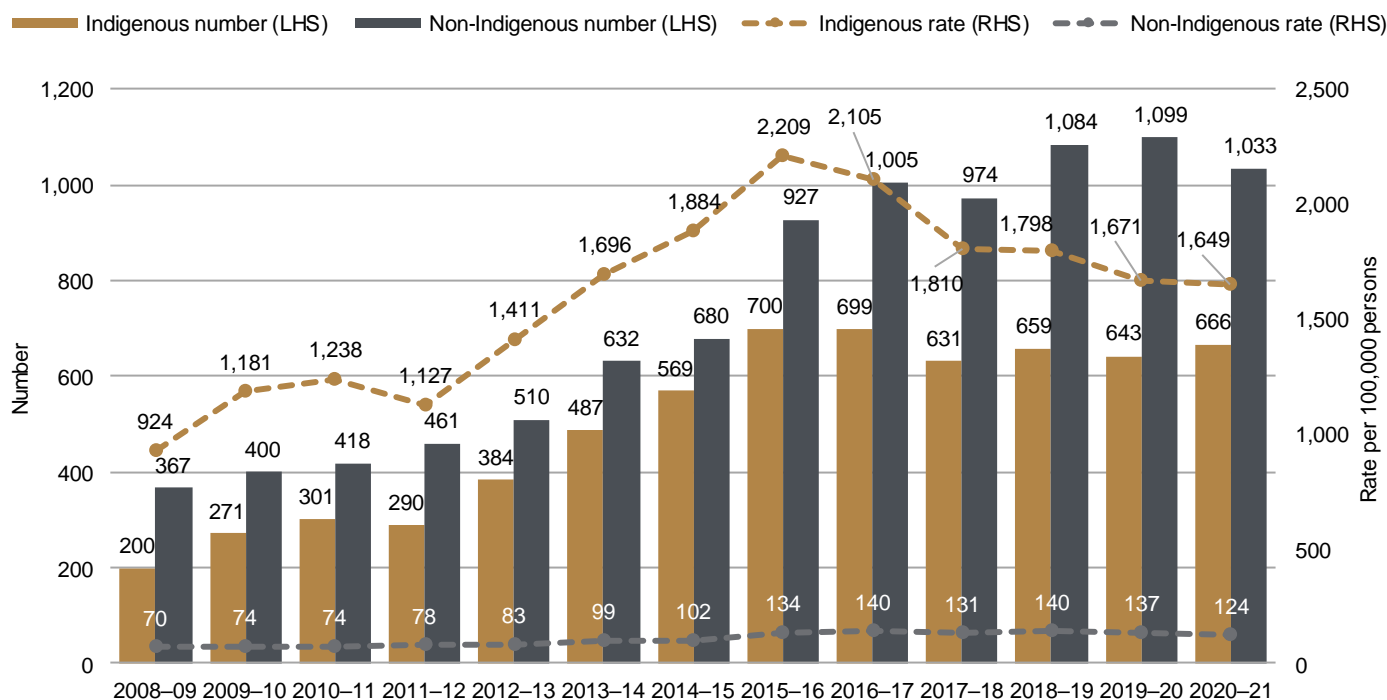
- the rate involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved (aged under 50 years) decreased from 1,904 to 1,792 per 100,000 persons (–5.9%)
- the rate involving non-Indigenous aggrieved (aged under 65 years) increased from 479 to 563 (+17.7%).

The larger growth in DVO applications involving an older aggrieved relative to younger aggrieved has resulted in an overall increase in the proportion of all DVO applications older people account for when comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21 — from 6.0% to 15.4% of DVO applications involving an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved, and from 2.1% to 4.2% of those involving non-Indigenous aggrieved (data not shown). More information on changes in DVO applications involving younger aggrieved is presented in Table B1 and Figure B1 in Appendix B.

A comparison of DVO applications trends with changes in victimisations involving older victims and known persons shows that the volume and rate of DVO applications were consistently higher than that observed for victimisations (see section 4.1.2). However, while the number and rate of DVO applications and victimisations both tended to increase when comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21, growth for DVO applications was most apparent in years preceding 2016–17, while increases in victimisations tended to be more apparent after 2016–17 (particularly those involving older non-Indigenous victims). For example, while the rate of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims continued to increase 80.1% when comparing 2015–16 and 2020–21, the rate of DVO applications decreased 7.9%.

Importantly, the higher growth in relevant DVO applications and victimisations involving older people compared with those occurring for young people suggests the possibility of increased criminal justice activity regarding the abuse of older people. This activity may reflect changes in reporting behaviour, offending behaviour and/or criminal justice system operations and contexts.

Figure 12 Number and rate of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved



LHS = left hand side

RHS = right hand side

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

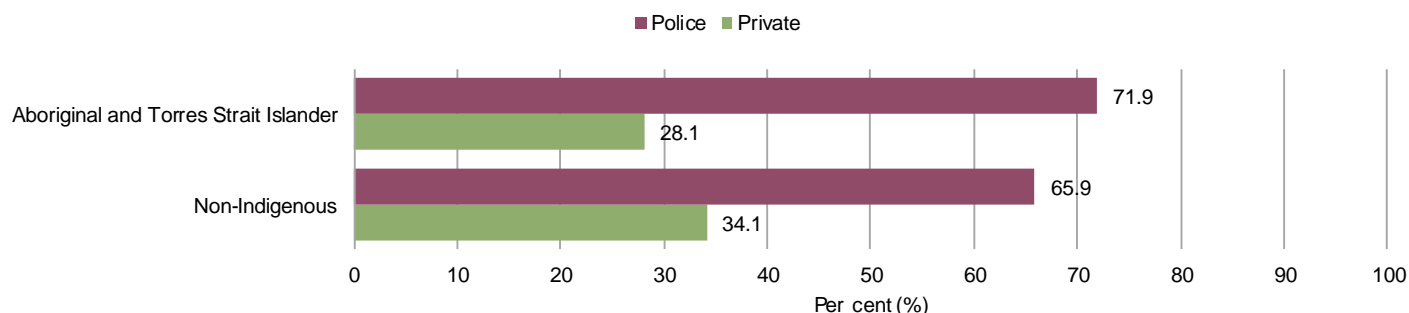
5.1.3. The majority of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved are lodged by police

Figure 13 shows that most DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved were lodged by police, although there was a slight difference by the Indigenous status of the aggrieved, with applications involving an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved being lodged by police more often (71.9%) compared with those involving a non-Indigenous aggrieved (65.9%).

The proportion of applications lodged by police increased over the observation period, particularly for those involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved (data not shown). This is illustrated by a decrease in the proportion of privately lodged DVO applications; for example, in 2008-09, 44.8% of applications involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved were lodged privately, decreasing to 23.6% in 2020-21 (with 76.4% being lodged by police). The most notable increase in police involvement during the observation period occurred in 2015-16 for DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved and this increase was sustained in subsequent years. More information on changes over time in the proportion of applications by lodgement source is presented in Figure B2 in Appendix B.

These findings are comparable to the lodgement source for DVO applications involving younger aggrieved, where a larger proportion of applications were lodged by police involving a younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved (79.8%), compared with the proportion of applications involving a younger non-Indigenous aggrieved (65.8%) (data not shown).

Figure 13 Lodgement source of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Note: Proportions exclude DVO applications lodged by other sources which accounted for 0.4% ($n = 29$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.6% ($n = 53$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data

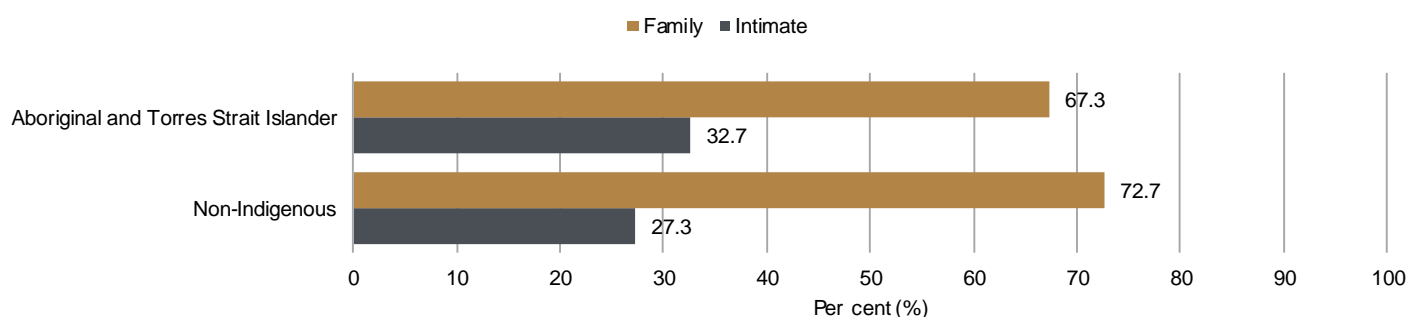
5.1.4. Family relationships account for the majority of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved

Figure 14 shows that the majority of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved related to a family relationship, and this was slightly more often the case for applications involving non-Indigenous aggrieved (72.7%) than for those involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved (67.3%). Further, the proportion of DVO applications relating to a family relationship fluctuated, but slightly increased overall during the observation period for both groups (data not shown). More information on trends in the proportion of DVO applications by relationship type is presented in Figure B3 in Appendix B.

When comparing these findings with DVO applications involving younger aggrieved, the greatest variation was observed between relationship contexts. That is, the large majority of applications with younger aggrieved related to an intimate relationship for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (74.0%) and non-Indigenous (80.2%) aggrieved (data not shown).

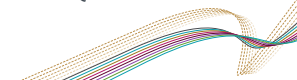
While not directly comparable due to the different approaches used to record relationship information, the above findings are consistent with findings examining the victimisation of older victims, in that family relationships also accounted for a larger proportion of victimisations than intimate relationships, and this was true for victimisations involving both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous victims (see section 4.1.4).

Figure 14 Relationship context of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Note: Proportions exclude DVO applications involving informal care relationships which accounted for 0.4% ($n = 25$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 1.1% ($n = 101$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data



Summary: Volume and characteristics of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved

- Older people are underrepresented among aggrieved on DVO applications relative to their representation in the population.
- There has been an overall increase in the number and rate of DVO applications involving older aggrieved, which mostly grew from 2008–09 to their peak around 2015–16 and 2016–17. There was relative stability in the number of DVO applications for both groups following 2016–17, although the rate of applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people decreased while the rate of applications involving older non-Indigenous people remained relatively stable after this year.
- Most DVO applications involving an older aggrieved are lodged by police rather than privately by the aggrieved or another authorised person.
- The majority of DVO applications involving an older aggrieved relate to a family relationship. This is substantially different to DVO applications involving younger aggrieved where the majority relate to an intimate relationship.

5.2. Profile of aggrieved and respondents on DVO applications

This section begins by providing information on the gender and age of aggrieved and respondents associated with DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved. This is followed by the presentation of findings relating to how characteristics of DVO applications differ based on the Indigenous status and gender of the aggrieved. Readers are reminded that the results below are based on counts of DVO applications, rather than counts of unique people who have been named as an aggrieved, therefore the same person may be counted multiple times if they appear on multiple DVO applications. Respondents may also be counted multiple times if they appear on multiple DVO applications.

5.2.1. Older females account for the majority of aggrieved named on DVO applications, while males are most often the respondent

Figure 15 provides information about the gender breakdown for the aggrieved and respondents listed on DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous aggrieved. The findings show that applications most often involved females named as the aggrieved and males named as the respondent, regardless of Indigeneity. However, applications with an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved more often involved a female aggrieved (69.3%) than those involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved (59.3%). Further, a larger proportion of applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved named a female as the respondent (39.7%) than those involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved (31.0%). Although there was some fluctuation, the gender breakdowns for both aggrieved and respondents were broadly stable across the observation period (data not shown). More information on trends in the proportion of aggrieved and respondent gender is presented in Figure B4 and Figure B5 in Appendix B.

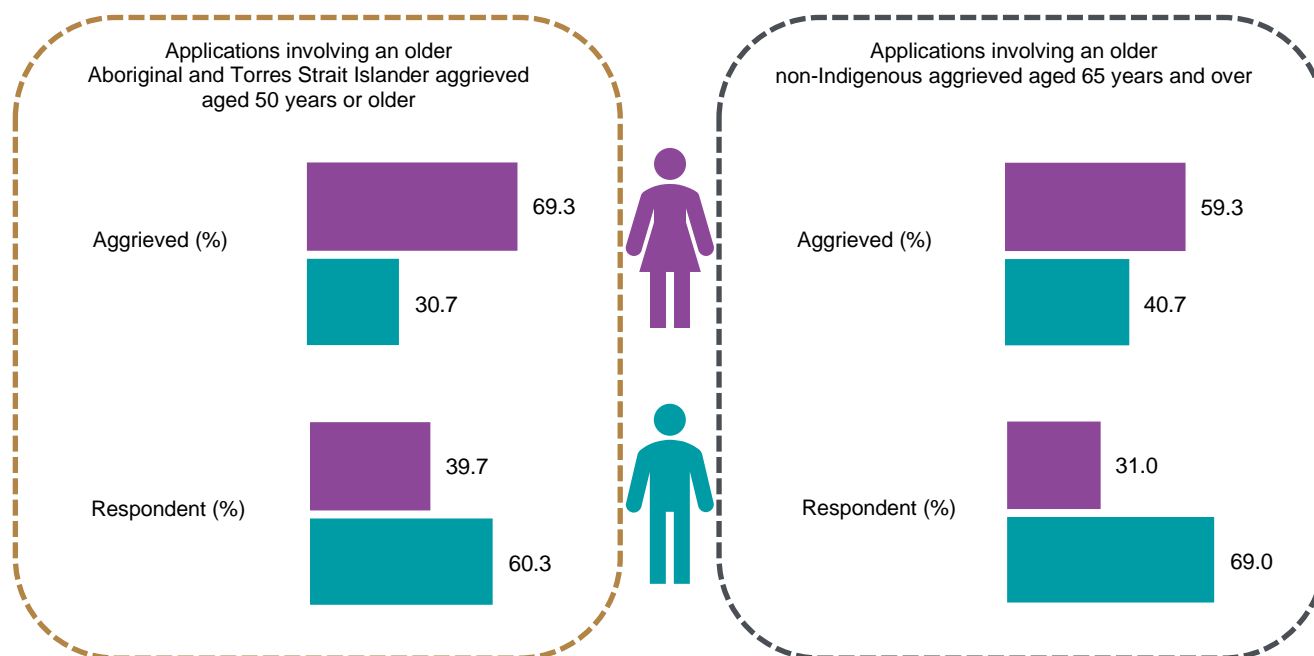
When comparing findings for applications involving older aggrieved with those involving younger aggrieved, it was apparent that although the majority of younger aggrieved were also female, a slightly larger proportion were female than when compared with applications involving older aggrieved (data not shown). For instance, among applications involving a younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved, 77.9% had a female aggrieved, while for applications involving a younger non-Indigenous aggrieved, 74.2% were female. Further, a higher proportion (around three-quarters) of respondents were male on applications involving younger aggrieved compared to those involving older aggrieved, for both groups.³⁴ This difference may be related to the higher proportion of DVO applications involving a younger aggrieved occurring in the context of intimate relationships (see section 5.1.4) which tend to more often involve DFV perpetrated by a male against a female partner.

The gender breakdown of DVO applications highlight differences compared to those observed for victimisations involving older victims (see section 4.2.1), including that while males made up the majority of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims (58.5%), females accounted for the majority of DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous

³⁴ Over the observation period, 73.3% of DVO applications with a younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved involved a male respondent, and 75.2% of DVO applications involving a younger non-Indigenous aggrieved involved a male respondent.

aggrieved. This difference is contributed to by the victimisation findings involving social relationships which accounted for a particularly large proportion of victimisations among older non-Indigenous male victims (see section 4.2.3).³⁵

Figure 15 Gender of aggrieved and respondent on DVO applications, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Notes:

1. The gender of the aggrieved was missing from 0.1% ($n = 4$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.1% ($n = 9$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period and were excluded from calculations.
2. The gender of the respondent was missing from 0.1% ($n = 4$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.1% ($n = 14$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period and were excluded from calculations.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data.

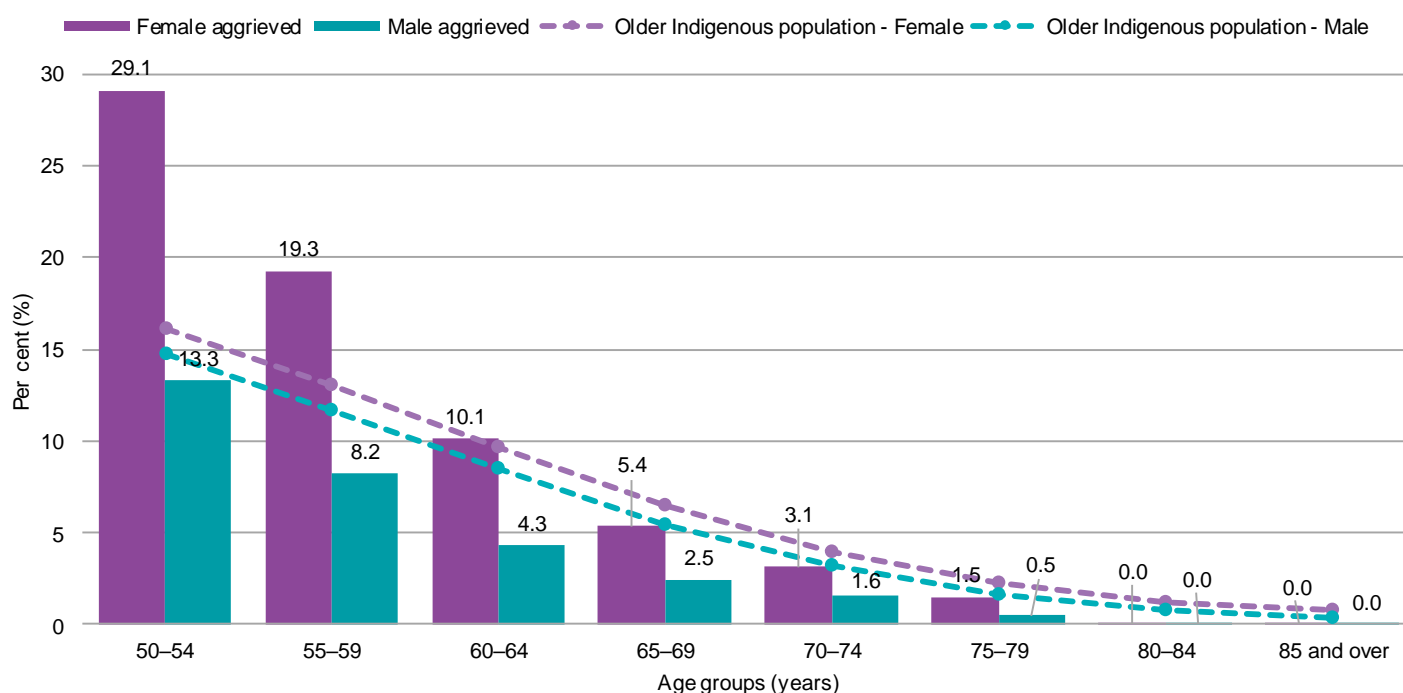
³⁵ For example, if only including family and intimate relationships, females would account for 54.1% of victimisations involving an older non-Indigenous victim.

5.2.2. The prevalence of applying for DVO decreases with age of the aggrieved, and the abuse of older people is often intergenerational

The proportional breakdown of DVO applications by gender and age group of the aggrieved (shown by the bars) compared with the corresponding proportions in the respective older population (shown by the dashed lines), for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people are presented in Figure 16 and Figure 17 respectively. Readers are reminded that different age cut-offs have been used in this project to identify older people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years or older and non-Indigenous people aged 65 years or older).

Females aged 50–54 years and 55–59 years accounted for a notably large proportion of aggrieved on DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved, with the proportion of DVO applications for each age group decreasing gradually among both male and female aggrieved (Figure 16). For example, females aged 50–54 years accounted for 29.1% of DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 16.1% of the older population. Within each age group, females comprise the larger proportion of aggrieved on DVO applications. This is similar to victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims which were also more concentrated among the younger age groups, particularly for females (see section 4.2.2).

Figure 16 Distribution of DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the aggrieved by gender and age group, 2008–09 to 2020–21

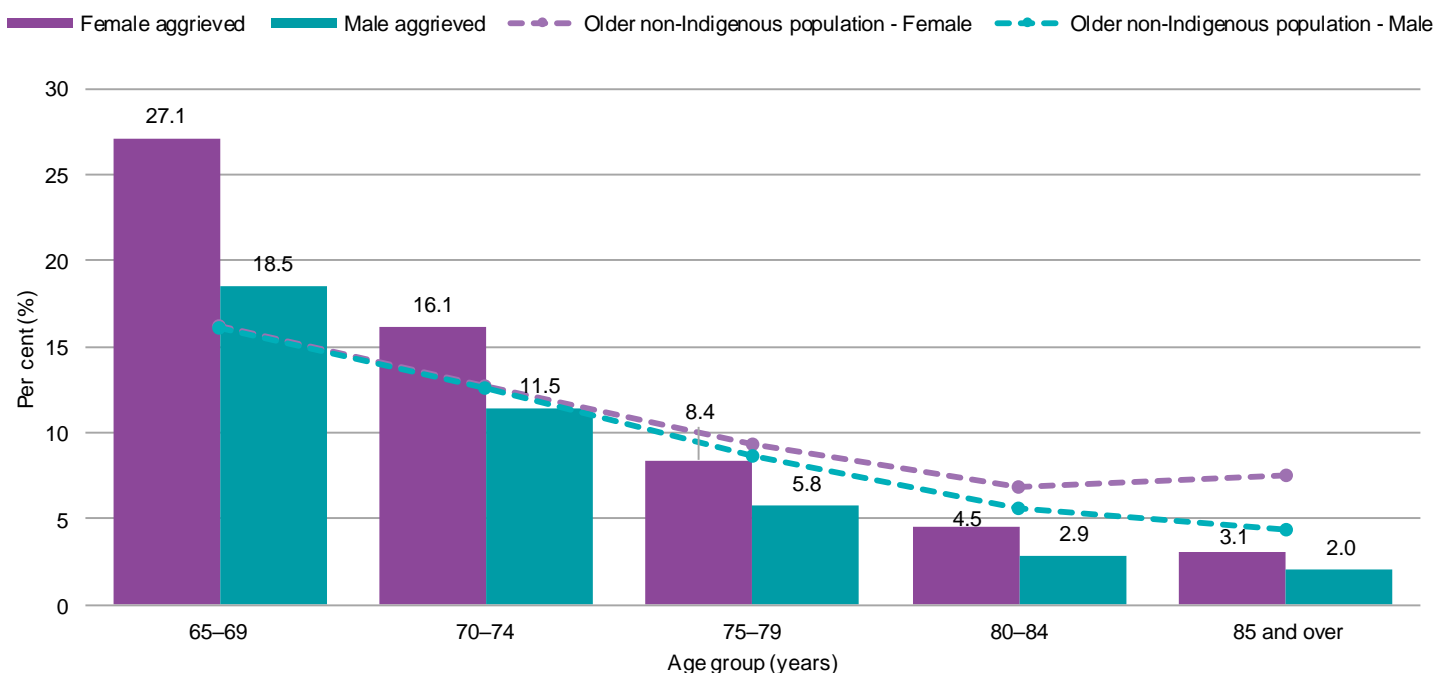


Note: Aggrieved gender information was missing from 0.1% ($n = 4$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

When examining DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved, both females and males aged 65–69 years accounted for a larger proportion of DVO applications than their representation in the older non-Indigenous community (Figure 17). This is most notable among females aged 65–69 years who were the aggrieved on 27.1% of DVO applications while they comprise 16.2% of the older non-Indigenous population. Similar to the distribution of DVO applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved shown above, there was a gradual decrease in the proportion of DVO applications with age for both male and female aggrieved, with females being the majority of aggrieved in each age group. These results differ from the victimisation findings where males accounted for the majority of non-Indigenous victims in most age groups, particularly those aged 65–69 years (see section 4.2.2).

Figure 17 Distribution of DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous people as the aggrieved by gender and age group, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Note: Aggrieved gender information was missing from 0.1% ($n = 9$) of DVO applications involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period.

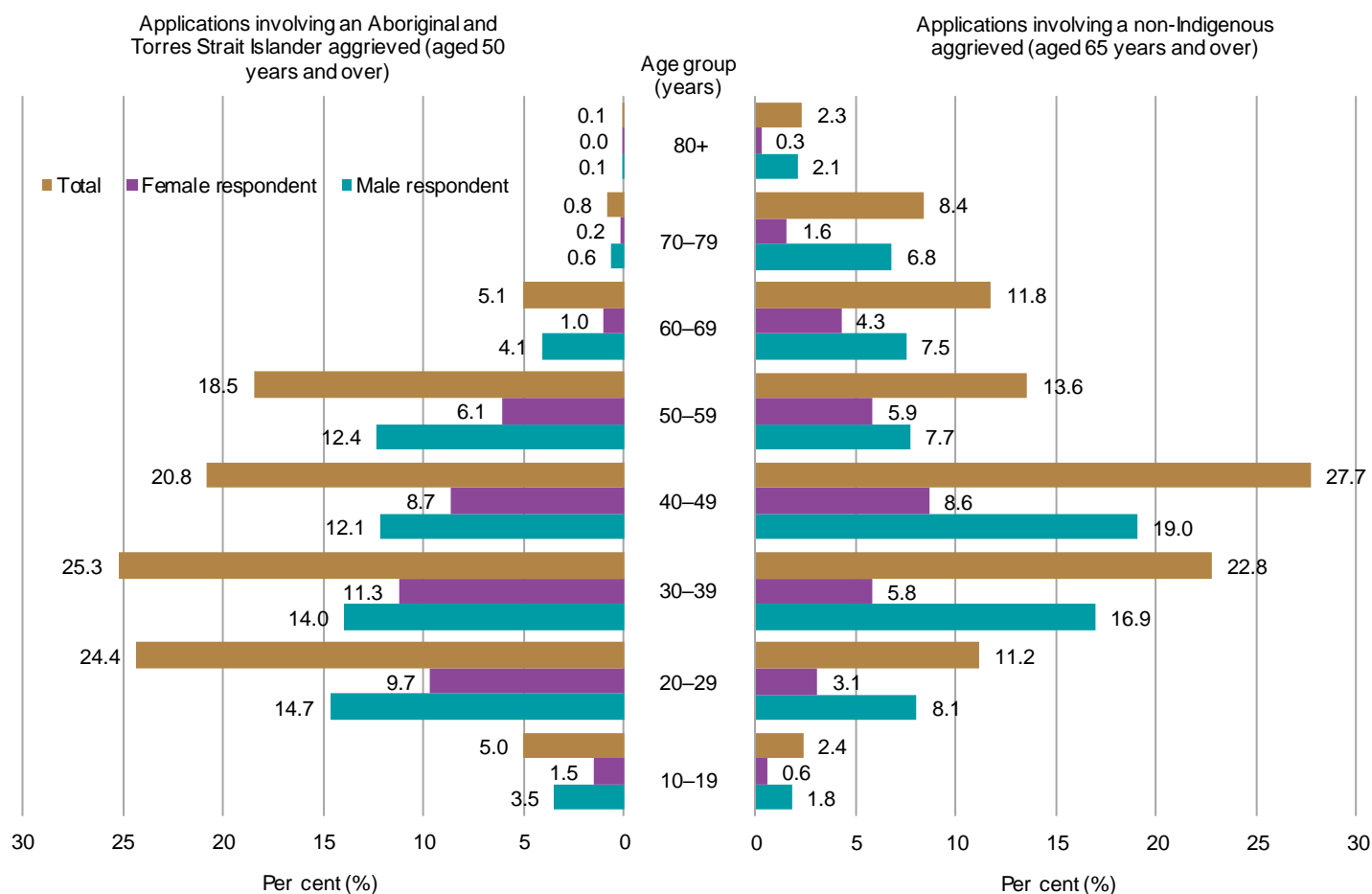
Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

5.2.3. Respondents are often younger than the aggrieved on DVO applications

Figure 18 provides information on the age group and gender of respondents on DVO applications involving an older aggrieved, by Indigenous status of the aggrieved. It shows that the age distribution of female and male respondents was broadly similar among DVO applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous aggrieved, and that respondents were typically much younger than the aggrieved. Further, as is also shown in section 5.2.1, males accounted for the majority of respondents overall and this is consistent when disaggregating by age group. For DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved (aged 50 years or older), respondents were most commonly aged 30–39 years (25.3% of applications), followed by 20–29 years (24.4%). For DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved (aged 65 years or older), respondents were most commonly aged 40–49 years (27.7% of applications) followed by 30–39 years (22.8%).

These findings are broadly similar to the age group and gender breakdowns of offenders involved in victimisations of older victims (see section 4.2). That is, they also show that those indicated as perpetrating abuse against an older person were on average substantially younger than the older person. This is explored further below.

Figure 18 Distribution of DVO applications by respondent age group and gender, 2008–09 to 2020–21

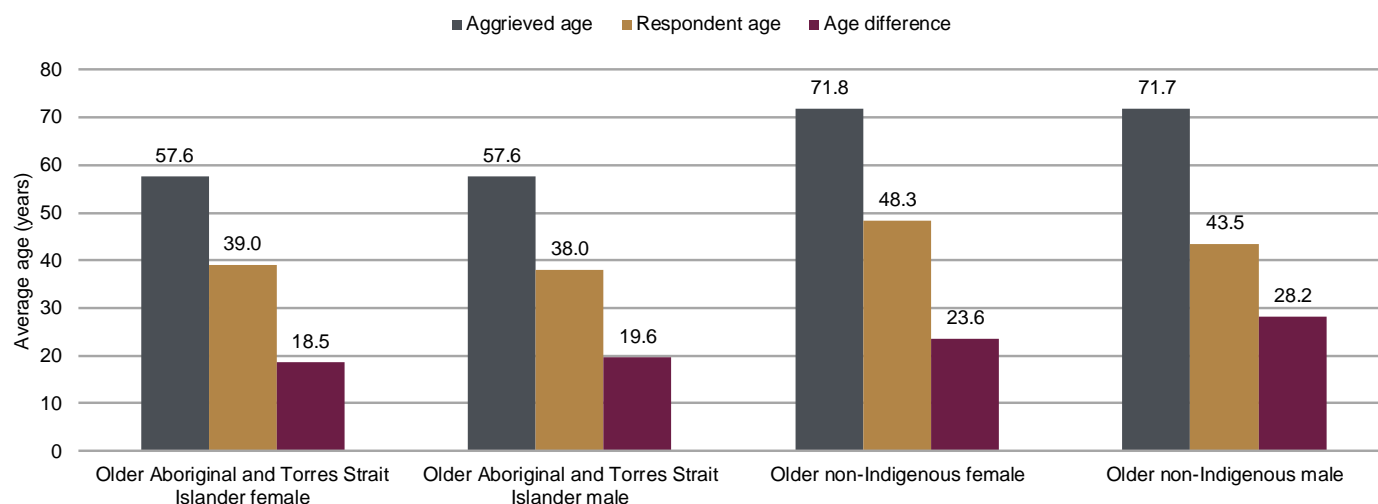


Note: Respondent gender and age information was incomplete for 486 (7.5%) DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 567 (5.9%) DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period and were excluded from calculations.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data

The differences in the average age of aggrieved and respondents further illustrates the intergenerational nature of abuse of older people (see Figure 19). About 20 years separated the average age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and respondents on DVO applications involving an older aggrieved, a smaller age gap compared with applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved, with 23.6 years separating older female aggrieved and their respondents, and 28.2 years separating older male aggrieved and their respondents. The difference in average age disparity between aggrieved and respondents may relate to the relationship contexts involved in DVO applications. This is explored further in the next section which examines how respondent gender and average age vary for each victim demographic group, and by relationship context.

Figure 19 Average age of aggrieved and respondent on DVO applications, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data

5.2.4. Respondent demographics and the relationship context varies for applications with different aggrieved demographics

Figure 20 summarises information for DVO applications involving each older aggrieved demographic group with regard to the average age of the aggrieved; the average age and gender of respondents; the relationship contexts involved in DVO applications; and how respondent age and gender varies according to the relationship context.

The key points for **DVO applications involving each aggrieved demographic group** include:

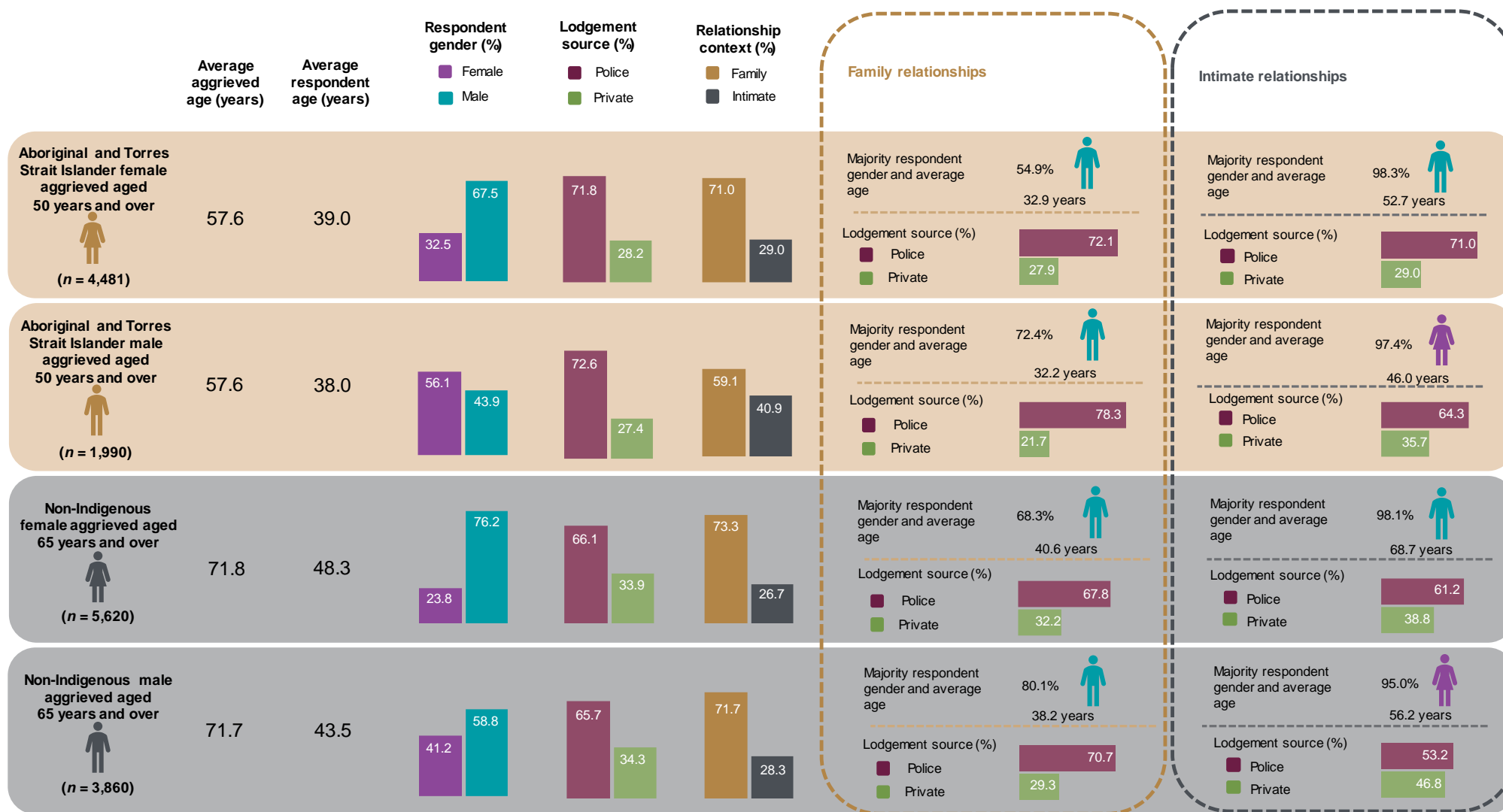
- Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female aggrieved most often had a family member as the respondent (71.0%), of whom the majority were male (54.9%), with an average age of 32.9 years.
- Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male aggrieved most often had a family member as the respondent (59.1%), of whom the majority were male (72.4%), with an average age of 32.2 years.
- Older non-Indigenous female aggrieved most often had a family member as the respondent (73.3%), of whom the majority were male (68.3%), with an average age of 40.6 years.
- Older non-Indigenous male aggrieved most often had a family member as the respondent (71.7%), of whom the majority were male (80.1%), with an average age of 38.2 years.

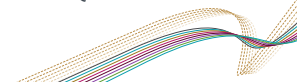
In comparing results, there are some **apparent differences between each victim demographic group** which provide insight into how the dynamics of abuse of older people may differ at the intersections of gender and Indigenous status, including:

- Males comprised the majority of respondents named on applications relating to family relationships for all aggrieved demographic groups, although applications involving an older female aggrieved had a larger proportion of female respondents, particularly for applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female aggrieved (45.1% of respondents were female).
- Applications with an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male aggrieved were the only group of applications where the majority of respondents were female. This was contributed to by a notably larger proportion of DVO applications relating to an intimate relationship for this group compared with the others, where almost all respondents were female (97.4%).
- While DVO applications were most often lodged by police, a larger proportion were lodged privately in the context of an intimate relationship, particularly for those with an older non-Indigenous male aggrieved (46.8% were lodged privately).

These findings are broadly similar to the findings regarding victimisations involving older victims shown in the previous chapter (see section 4.2.3). This includes that family relationships are more commonly involved than intimate relationships for each victim/aggrieved demographic group. Further, males comprise the majority of offenders/respondents (although to a lesser extent for female victims/aggrieved) who are likely intergenerational family members since they are on average several decades younger than the victim/aggrieved.

Figure 20 Aggrieved and respondent characteristics and DVO application lodgement source, overall and by relationship type, 2008–09 to 2020–21





Notes on Figure 20:

1. Aggrieved gender information was missing from 0.1% ($n = 4$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.1% ($n = 9$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period and have been excluded from calculations.
2. Lodgement source proportions exclude DVO applications lodged by other sources which accounted for 0.4% ($n = 29$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.6% ($n = 53$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period and have been excluded from calculations.
3. Relationship context proportions exclude DVO applications involving informal care relationships which accounted for 0.4% ($n = 25$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 1.1% ($n = 101$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period and have been excluded from calculations.
4. Respondent gender and age information was incomplete for 486 (7.5%) DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 567 (5.9%) involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period and were excluded from calculations. Three records were excluded due to respondent ages exceeding possible human life span.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data

Summary: Profile of aggrieved and respondents

- Females account for the majority of aggrieved on DVO applications involving both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and older non-Indigenous aggrieved. Respondents are most often male for both groups.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50–54 and 55–59 years and non-Indigenous people aged 65–69 years (particularly females) account for a larger proportion of DVO applications involving an older aggrieved than they account for in their respective community populations, with prevalence typically decreasing with age for both females and males regardless of Indigeneity.
- Respondents are often several decades younger than the aggrieved, on average.
- Typical respondent demographic and relationship contexts vary for different aggrieved demographic groups, this includes:
 - While the majority of respondents for each aggrieved demographic group are family members who are most often male, the extent of this majority varies. This includes older female aggrieved more often having a female respondent in the family relationship context, compared with older male aggrieved.
 - The majority of respondents in DVO applications overall are male, although when examining by the demographic profile of the aggrieved, the majority of respondents are female in DVO applications where the aggrieved is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male. This is related to having a notably larger proportion of DVO applications involving intimate relationships.
 - DVO applications involving older aggrieved are most often lodged by police, although a higher proportion are lodged privately in an intimate relationship compared with a family relationship, particularly for older non-Indigenous aggrieved.
- Findings regarding DVO applications involving older aggrieved are broadly similar to findings regarding victimisations involving older victims. This includes DVO applications related to a family relationship being more common when compared with an intimate relationship, and that males are most often the respondent/offender.



6.0 Discussion

The *Insights into the abuse of older Queenslanders* research project examined police and courts administrative data to determine their possible utility in providing insights into the abuse of older Queenslanders. The results of the project provide meaningful information regarding the volume and context of possible abuse coming to the attention of the criminal justice system, which can be considered in conjunction with other sources of knowledge regarding this important issue. This includes research showing that most older people do not report their abuse to the criminal justice system (Qu et al. 2021), emotional/psychological abuse is the most common form of abuse of older people (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021; Qu et al. 2021), and that the criminal justice system tends to respond to more serious matters of abuse (Qu et al. 2021). The key findings of the project are discussed below.

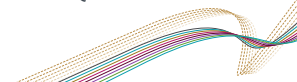
Queensland's law and justice system is responding to a higher volume of abuse of older people

The project findings suggest that the prevalence of abuse among older people is considerably lower than that experienced by younger people. This reflects the age-crime curve discussed in other studies showing that the perpetration and experience of crime tends to decline with age (ABS 2022; QGSO 2021e; QGSO 2021f). However, growth in the number and rate of personal crime victimisations involving older victims perpetrated by known persons and DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved exceeded that apparent for younger people when comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21. These findings offer some evidence to suggest changing patterns of the abuse of older people, or could reflect improvements in the reporting to, and/or detection of abuse of older people by, the law and justice system over time. When comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21 the rate of:

- victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims increased 76.1%, compared with a 3.2% increase involving younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims
- DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved increased 78.4%, compared with a 5.9% decrease involving younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved
- victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims increased 97.7%, compared with a 14.7% increase involving younger non-Indigenous victims
- DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved increased 75.5%, compared with a 17.7% increase involving younger non-Indigenous aggrieved.

Growth in the abuse of older people as indicated by police and courts data was not apparent across the entire observation period, and trends tended to deviate around 2015–16 and 2016–17. For example, while victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims continued to increase between 2015–16 and 2020–21, the rate of DVO applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved remained relatively stable during the same period. These different trends may reflect the different nature of victimisations and DVO applications, including that relevant victimisations for the purposes of this project included a broader range or relationship contexts than DVO applications, and that victimisations typically referred to assault (an uncommon form of abuse of older people), while DVO applications may be made in response to a broader range of behaviours, including emotional/psychological abuse (the most common form of abuse of older people) (Qu et al. 2021). These divergent trends occurred around the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report which resulted in broad reforms to DFV legislation, policy and practice, likely impacting the use of DVO as a police response to abuse of older people in intimate and family relationship contexts, and may have had less of an impact on trends in victimisations (which include social and professional relationships which are outside the scope of the DVO framework). This supports the approach that while abuse of older people may often occur in the context of DFV, the broader range of relationship contexts, and the forms of abuse more commonly experienced, mean that it requires responses which account for the specific nature of abuse of older people.

Divergent trends relating to Indigeneity were also apparent for the period following 2015–16. While the number and rate of victimisations involving both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and older non-Indigenous people increased between 2015–16 and 2020–21, the number of DVO applications for both groups was relatively stable, and the rate of DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved decreased while the rate of applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved remained relatively stable. This may suggest DFV initiatives or operations implemented around 2015–16 impacted the use of DVO for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people differently to older non-Indigenous people. The research found some evidence of changing patterns of practice relating to the lodgement of DVO applications by police when comparing 2008–09 with 2020–21, with a notably large increase in police involvement occurring from 2015–16 onwards for applications involving older non-Indigenous aggrieved in particular. This also coincided with a notable increase in the proportion of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous victims occurring in the context of family and intimate relationships around 2015–16 onwards, which may also indicate changes in police



responses to DFV and willingness of victims to report DFV to police. However, the relatively small numbers of relevant victimisations and DVO applications and various unknowns (such as patterns of underreporting) should be considered in the interpretation of these results.

Criminal justice data suggest a higher prevalence of abuse of older people among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than non-Indigenous people

The rate of relevant personal crime victimisations and DVO applications involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was consistently higher than those observed for older non-Indigenous people across the observation period. For example, in 2020–21, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were about 13 times more likely than older non-Indigenous people to be recorded as having experienced a personal crime perpetrated by a known person or be listed as the aggrieved on a DVO application.

Indications of a higher prevalence of abuse among older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are consistent with other research findings (QGSO 2021e). They also highlight the importance of culturally-sensitive responses to the abuse experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people which may be understood with consideration of the ongoing effects of colonisation (ALRC 2017b). This includes intergenerational trauma which has been shown to contribute to a deterioration of kinship structures and cultural obligations towards Elders in some communities (Kimberley Birds 2020). However, more culturally-informed research into the dynamics of abuse experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is required.

The context of abuse of older people differs in relation to socio-demographic characteristics

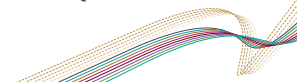
The project showed that personal crime victimisations perpetrated by known persons experienced by older people most commonly occurred within social relationships, with around half (51.4%) of victimisations involving older non-Indigenous people and 40.2% of victimisations involving older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people taking place within social relationships. This finding may possibly relate to variance in reporting behaviours, the different environments in which victimisations perpetrated within social relationships may occur (such as in public) and police recording practices.³⁶

Project findings also aligned with data available elsewhere showing that the abuse of older people more commonly occurs in the context of a family relationship than in an intimate relationship (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021; Qu et al. 2021). This differs for abuse indicated for younger people which most often occurs within the context of an intimate relationship. This finding is likely to reflect the ways in which relationship dynamics change over time, with cohabitation with an intimate partner tending to become less common (AIFS 2022) and the degree of dependence on family members tending to increase with age. Changing relationship dynamics may coincide with or precipitate emerging vulnerabilities relating to finances, housing, and the provision of care, thus potentially increasing an older person's level of dependence on family and their susceptibility to abuse, including the use of coercive control (Queensland Law Society and the Public Advocate 2022).

Further analysis regarding relationship contexts showed some important differences. This includes:

- Personal crime experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (16.1%) more commonly occurred in an intimate relationship than that experienced by older non-Indigenous people (7.1%).
- Personal crime experienced by older non-Indigenous people (17.6%) more commonly occurred in a professional context than that experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (5.7%).
- DVO applications with an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person listed as the aggrieved (32.7%) were slightly more likely to involve intimate relationships than those with an older non-Indigenous person listed as the aggrieved (27.3%).

³⁶ Barriers to reporting abuse from family members and intimate partners may involve significant concerns about ongoing access to care and family, both of which are factors less likely to be present in the context of a social relationship. Abuse occurring in the context of a social relationship may also be more likely to occur in a public setting which may increase its visibility and therefore the likelihood of bystander or police intervention when compared with abuse occurring in the context of a family, intimate or professional relationship. Another potential contributor to the relatively high prevalence of victimisation associated with a social relationship relative to other relationship contexts is the recent change to recording practices surrounding personal offences. Prior to 1 July 2021, personal offences were not recorded by police if the victim refused to support prosecution, which may have disproportionately reduced the recording of abuse occurring in a familial context relative to that occurring in a social context, both due to the likely absence of dependence, and the higher likelihood of witnesses being present to support prosecution.



Further analysis regarding the gender of older people experiencing abuse and those perpetrating this abuse also showed variation. This includes:

- While males accounted for the majority of personal crime offenders involved in victimisations of both older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and older non-Indigenous people, a larger share of victims of personal crime experienced by older non-Indigenous people were male (58.5%) than those experienced by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (40.4%). That is, males accounted for the larger share of victimisations experienced by older non-Indigenous people, who were also more likely to experience victimisation in social and professional relationships.
- Applicants listed on DVO applications relating to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (69.3%) and older non-Indigenous people (59.3%) tended to be female, while respondents listed on DVO applications relating to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (60.3%) and older non-Indigenous people (69.0%) were mostly male.

Socio-demographic variance in the abuse of older people as indicated by criminal justice data is likely to reflect gendered patterns of offending behaviour and victimisation. For example, other studies and sources of data have shown that men are substantially more likely than women to commit crime (QGSO 2022), men are more likely than women to experience violent crime in public than private contexts (ABS 2022), higher levels of recorded domestic and family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than non-Indigenous people (QGSO 2022), and higher levels of personal crime victimisation among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females compared with all other groups (QGSO 2021e).

The prevalence of personal crime victimisation and applying for DVO decreases with age

Other studies have shown that the likelihood of being a victim of crime decreases with age (ABS 2022; QGSO 2021e), which was also observed in the project's findings. Most personal crime victimisations involving a known person and DVO applications relating to older people occurred for those aged 50 to 59 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (who were most often female) and 65 to 74 years (who were most often male for victimisations and most often female for DVO applications) for non-Indigenous people. These results are consistent with findings from the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, which found that the younger age group (65–69 years) had the highest estimated prevalence of abuse (Qu et al. 2021).

Apart from a decreased likelihood of experiencing abuse in older years, the apparent decrease in recorded abuse with advancing age may be related to other factors. Among these factors is decreased reporting resulting from reduced capacity to report abuse among older age groups as a result of a higher prevalence of health issues (such as cognitive decline); increased acceptance and difficulty recognising abuse; and an increased reliance on support from perpetrators as people age (Qu et al. 2021).

The abuse of older people tends to be intergenerational

The intergenerational nature of abuse of older people has been highlighted elsewhere (Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021; Qu et al. 2021) and was also reflected in project findings with perpetrators often much younger than the victim. For abuse experienced by older people as indicated by both personal crime victimisations and DVO applications, about 20 years separated the average age of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and their perpetrators, while around 25 to nearly 30 years was observed between the average age of older non-Indigenous victims and their perpetrators.

While abuse occurring in the context of a family relationship involving the child of the victim are by nature intergenerational, more detailed analysis of the victimisation data showed that relatives (family relations other than the children of the victim), social contacts and professionals involved in victimisations are also typically much younger than the victim. This finding may relate to greater opportunities to commit abuse, negative attitudes informed by ageism and stressors related to providing care (ALRC 2017a; Gillbard and Leggatt-Cook 2021; QGSO 2021f; Qu et al. 2021). The smaller average age gap between perpetrators and older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and aggrieved compared with non-Indigenous victims and aggrieved may reflect different structures and dynamics of family and kinship relationships for these groups (ALRC 2017a; Office of the Public Advocate 2005). The intergenerational nature of the abuse of older people has also been observed by other studies (Qu et al. 2021).



6.1. Future research

Findings and limitations from the present study raised a number of topics for future research into the abuse of older people in Queensland. These include:

- *Queensland-based abuse of older people prevalence study*

The findings from the current research provided potential insight into the volume and characteristics of certain types of abuse of older people that come to the attention of police or courts. However, police data contain only instances of physical or sexual abuse (personal offences), and court data reflect only cases of DFV that occur in eligible relational contexts and go on to result in a DVO application. Findings elsewhere indicate that physical and sexual abuse are relatively less common as forms of abuse of older people compared with emotional/psychological or financial/economic abuse, and that other relationships that include trust and/or a power imbalance to those typically available in DVO applications data may be associated with abuse of older people (e.g. professional, or social relationships other than those involving informal care). Consideration of abuse of older people in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context and the specific dynamics and forms of abuse which may occur will be crucial during survey design and should be informed by the perspectives of the community.

The various barriers to reporting abuse—which are likely more pronounced for reporting to legal authorities—and the difficulties in detecting abuse of vulnerable people in care settings also mean that many instances of abuse are likely not to be officially recorded. A Queensland-specific prevalence study that builds on the methodology employed by the National Prevalence Study would be best placed to overcome the knowledge and conceptual gaps presented by the use of administrative data in this study, and therefore contribute to a growing foundation of knowledge to inform the development of policy specific to Queensland.

- *Examining the circumstances associated with victimisation occurring in a social context*

The current research found a substantial proportion of victimisations of older people occur between individuals in a social relationship, particularly those involving older non-Indigenous male victims for whom three in five victimisations occur in a social context. Future research examining the location, time of day, granular relationship type, age differences between victim and offender and other situational factors could provide insight into the characteristics of this type of offending and, as a consequence, why it accounts for such a high proportion of recorded personal victimisation experienced by older people.

- *Property offences co-occurring in circumstances of abuse of older people*

A key limitation of the present study is the inability to examine non-physical abuse of older people, including theft, fraud and other property offences. While older victims are only able to be specifically attributed to personal offences using the police data available for this research, it may be possible to examine property offences that co-occur with these personal offences. This could potentially offer a starting point for scoping the volume of financial/economic abuse of older people using available administrative data.

6.2. Conclusion

While acknowledging the barriers to reporting the abuse of older people to law and justice agencies, this project has demonstrated the value of examining criminal justice data to understand elements of the abuse of older people. These data have shown how the prevalence and characteristics of (arguably more serious) abuse of older people can vary across different demographic groups and offer a way to support ongoing monitoring efforts. The project's findings broadly aligned with other sources of information, but also offered a way to observe trends over time and build further information regarding the abuse of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The latter being an acknowledged information gap.

Variation in the characteristics of abuse of older people highlights the importance of targeted harm reduction strategies that account for these differences. For example, issues of power and control may be less relevant to the abuse of older people than is the case for domestic and family violence given the broader range of relationship contexts in which this type of abuse may occur. Having said this, intimate partner violence is still an element in the abuse of older people, for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples more so than older non-Indigenous people.



Glossary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: the collective term used by this project when discussing administrative data indicating that a person has been identified as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This information may have been self-reported or reflect information included on a DVO application made on behalf of another person. The use of this term is not intended to diminish or deny the diversity between and within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families, communities, groups, and nations across Australia.

Abuse of older people: also known as elder abuse, the definition used for this paper is '*a single or repeated act or failure to act, including threats, that results in harm or distress to an older person. These occur where there is an expectation of trust and/or where there is a power imbalance between the party responsible and the older person*' (see Kaspiew et al. 2019, p. 4). Types of abuse may include physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, financial/economic abuse, sexual abuse, social abuse, and neglect.

Aggrieved: the primary person listed on a DVO application or a DVO as requiring protection, or the person against whom a DVO breach offence has been committed.

Domestic and family violence (DFV): under the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld), DFV is defined as behaviour within an intimate personal, family, or informal care relationship whereby one person is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive towards the other person, and/or is threatening, coercive or in any other way controls or dominates the other person so as to cause them to fear for their own safety or wellbeing or that of someone else.

Domestic violence order (DVO): a collective term for a temporary protection order, protection order and varied order imposed by the court (typically a Magistrates Court) to protect a person(s) experiencing DFV. A DVO protects the aggrieved and named person(s) by listing various conditions that the respondent must adhere to, any breach of which is a criminal offence. Applications for DVO may be lodged by police or privately by the aggrieved or other authorised persons.

Indigenous: a term used in figures and tables to refer to individuals in the data who either self-identified, or where police or another applicant have identified them, as being Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Most serious offence (MSO): refers to the most serious offence identified within a single incident of victimisation (as one incident may be comprised of more than one offence type), based on classification by the National Offence Index.

National Offence Index: a tool developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to provide an ordinal ranking of offence categories according to the seriousness of the offence. This tool can be used to rank multiple offences within a victimisation event by seriousness to identify the MSO.

Non-Indigenous: people who self-identified as being 'Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander' when coming into contact with police.

Older people: those aged 50 years or older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those aged 65 years or older for non-Indigenous people.

Personal crime: criminal offences against the person, which include the offence categories of assault, sexual offences, homicide, robbery, and other offences against the person.

Respondent: a person identified on a DVO application or a DVO as being the individual using domestic or family violence against the aggrieved and is thus the individual from whom the aggrieved and any named person listed on the application require protection.

Victimisation: a single incident of victimisation from personal crime. A person may experience victimisation involving more than one offence (and offence type) and offender, within an incident.

Younger people: those aged under 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those aged under 65 years for non-Indigenous people.



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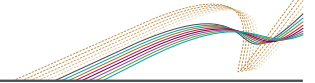
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Appendices

Appendix A: Supplementary findings – Victimisations

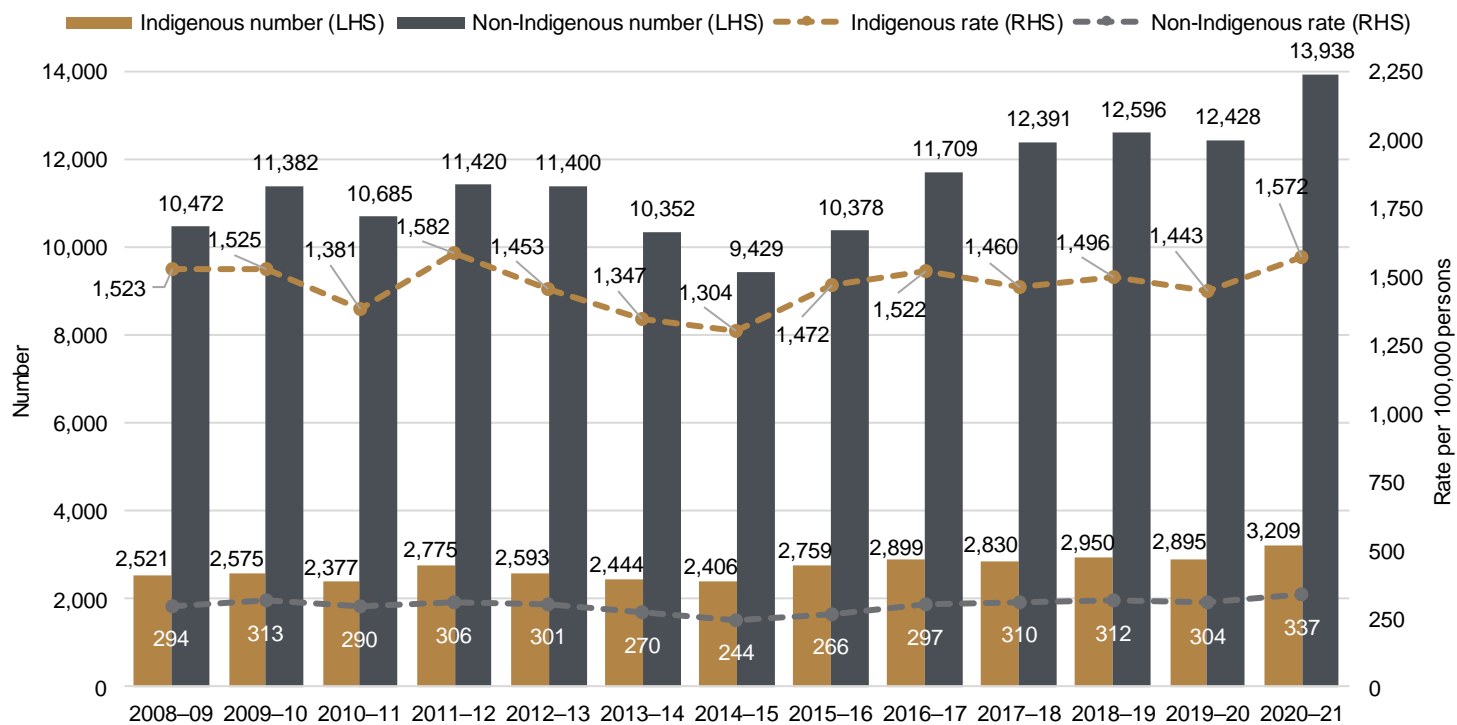
Table A1 Percentage change in victimisations involving older and younger victims by Indigenous status and relationship context, 2008–09 compared with 2020–21

		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander					Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander			
		2008–09	2020–21	% change			2008–09	2020–21	% change	
Victimisation events involving older victims	All relationships	Number	124	475	283.1	All relationships	Number	3,163	4,533	43.3
		Rate	573	1,176	105.3		Rate	1,911	2,221	16.2
	Known persons	Number	94	309	228.7	Known persons	Number	2,521	3,209	27.3
		Rate	434	765	76.1		Rate	1,523	1,572	3.2
	Stranger and unknown	Number	30	166	453.3	Stranger and unknown	Number	642	1,324	106.2
		Rate	139	411	196.5		Rate	388	649	67.2
	Non-Indigenous		2008–09	2020–21	% change	Non-Indigenous		2008–09	2020–21	% change
	All relationships	Number	336	1,233	267.0	All relationships	Number	21,452	29,424	37.2
		Rate	64	148	128.8		Rate	602	711	18.2
	Known persons	Number	158	501	217.1	Known persons	Number	10,472	13,938	33.1
		Rate	30	60	97.7		Rate	294	337	14.7
	Stranger and unknown	Number	178	732	311.2	Stranger and unknown	Number	10,980	15,486	41.0
Rate		34	88	156.4	Rate		308	374	21.6	
Total		2008–09	2020–21	% change	Total		2008–09	2020–21	% change	
All relationships	Number	460	1,708	271.3	All relationships	Number	24,615	33,957	38.0	
Known persons	Number	252	810	221.4	Known persons	Number	12,993	17,147	32.0	
Stranger and unknown	Number	208	898	331.7	Stranger and unknown	Number	11,622	16,810	44.6	
Victimisation events involving younger victims	All relationships	Number	3,163	4,533	43.3	All relationships	Number	21,452	29,424	37.2
		Rate	1,911	2,221	16.2		Rate	602	711	18.2
	Known persons	Number	2,521	3,209	27.3	Known persons	Number	10,472	13,938	33.1
		Rate	1,523	1,572	3.2		Rate	294	337	14.7
	Stranger and unknown	Number	642	1,324	106.2	Stranger and unknown	Number	10,980	15,486	41.0
		Rate	388	649	67.2		Rate	308	374	21.6
	Non-Indigenous		2008–09	2020–21	% change	Non-Indigenous		2008–09	2020–21	% change
	All relationships	Number	21,452	29,424	37.2	All relationships	Number	24,615	33,957	38.0
		Rate	602	711	18.2		Rate	602	711	18.2
	Known persons	Number	10,472	13,938	33.1	Known persons	Number	12,993	17,147	32.0
		Rate	294	337	14.7		Rate	294	337	14.7
	Stranger and unknown	Number	10,980	15,486	41.0	Stranger and unknown	Number	10,980	15,486	41.0
Rate		308	374	21.6	Rate		308	374	21.6	
Total		2008–09	2020–21	% change	Total		2008–09	2020–21	% change	
All relationships	Number	24,615	33,957	38.0	All relationships	Number	24,615	33,957	38.0	
Known persons	Number	12,993	17,147	32.0	Known persons	Number	12,993	17,147	32.0	
Stranger and unknown	Number	11,622	16,810	44.6	Stranger and unknown	Number	11,622	16,810	44.6	

Note: Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged 50 years and over while younger victims are those aged under 50 years. Older non-Indigenous victims are those aged 65 years and over while younger victims are those aged under 65 years.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS and ABS (2019B; 2021) data.

Figure A1 Number and rate of victimisations perpetrated by known persons, younger victims

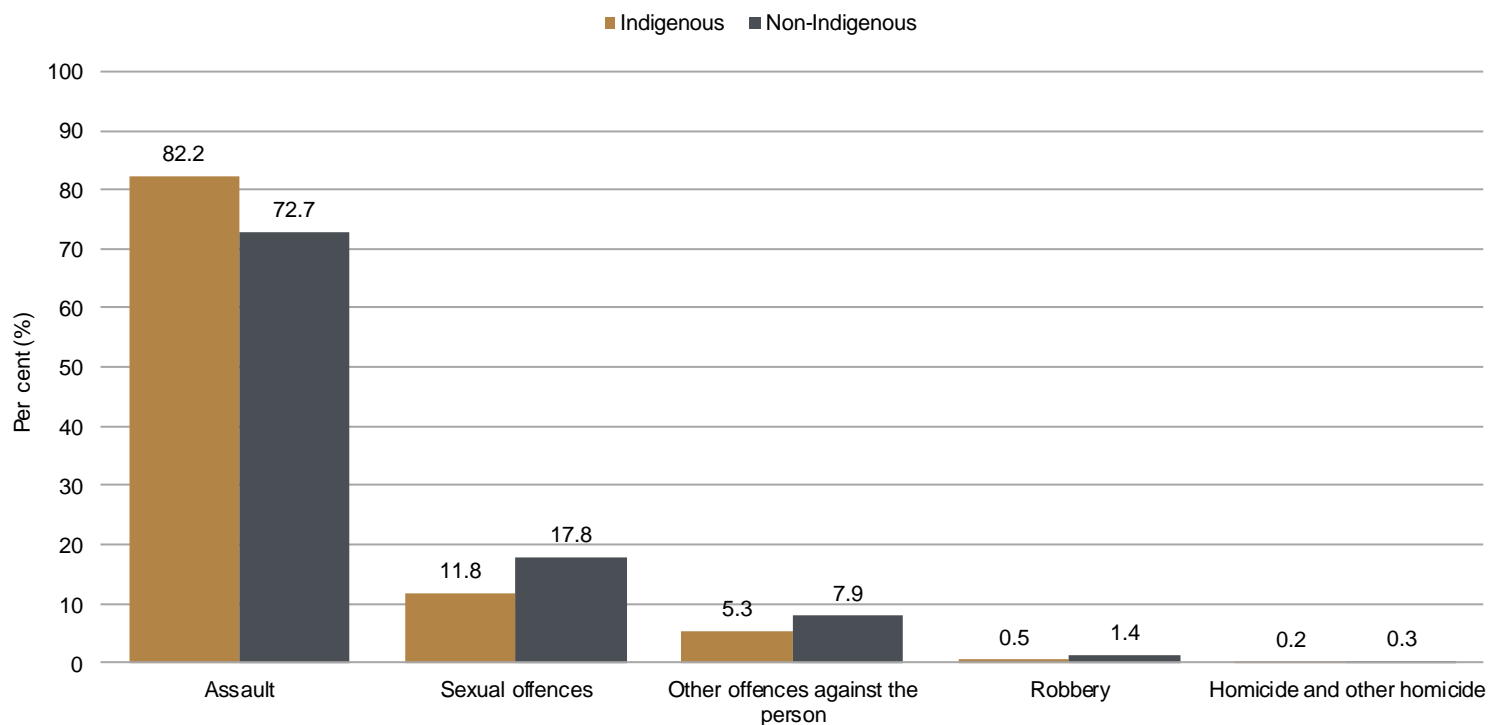


LHS = left hand side RHS = right hand side

Note: Younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged under 50 years, younger non-Indigenous victims are those aged under 65 years.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

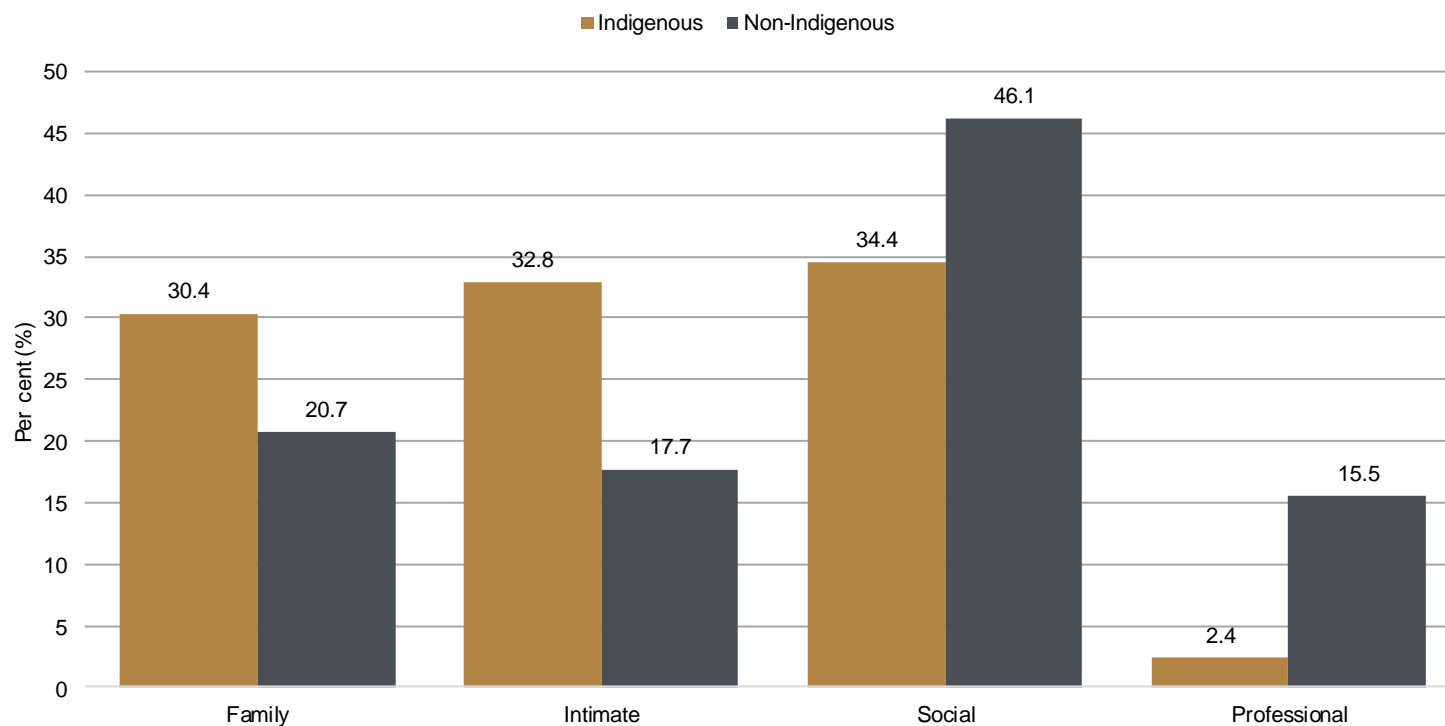
Figure A2 Distribution of victimisations perpetrated by known persons by MSO, younger victims, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Note: Younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged under 50 years, younger non-Indigenous victims are those aged under 65 years.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

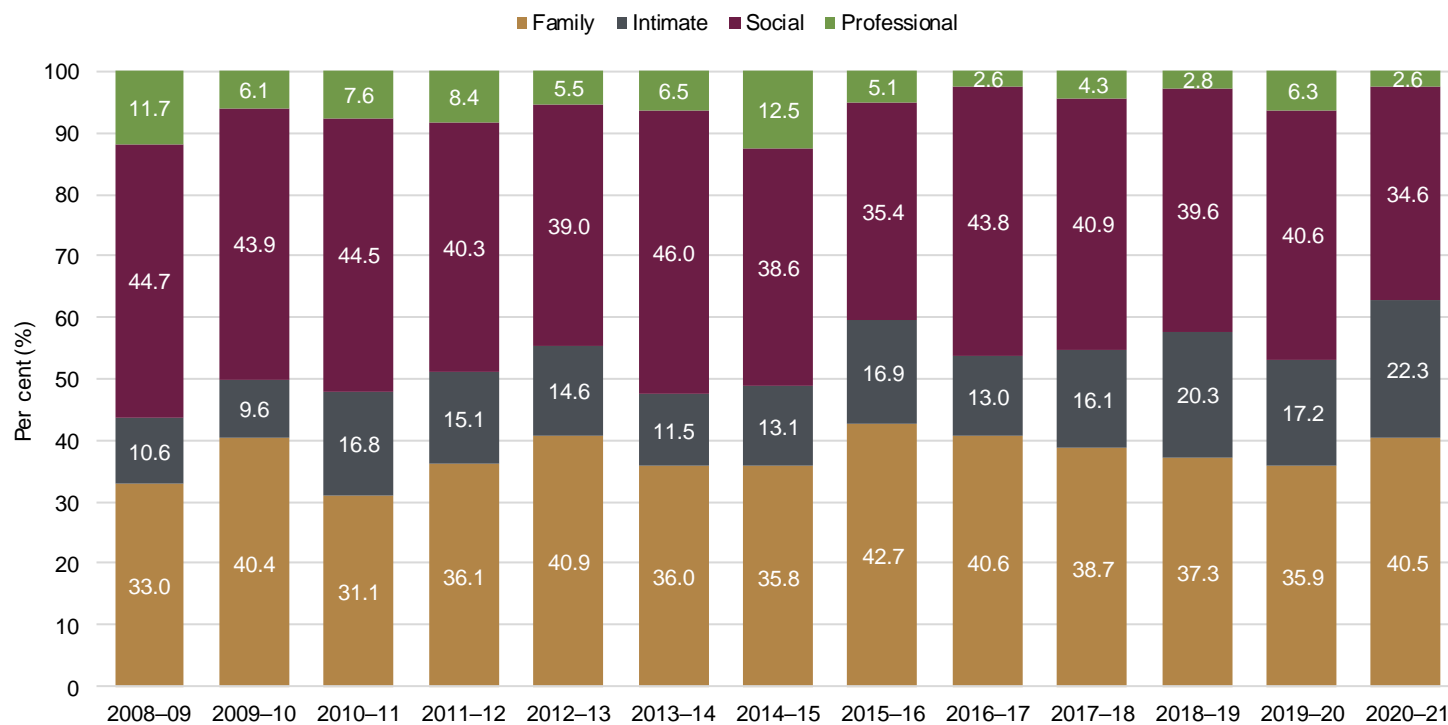
Figure A3 Distribution of victimisations perpetrated by known persons by relationship context, younger victims, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Note: Younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged under 50 years, younger non-Indigenous victims are those aged under 65 years.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

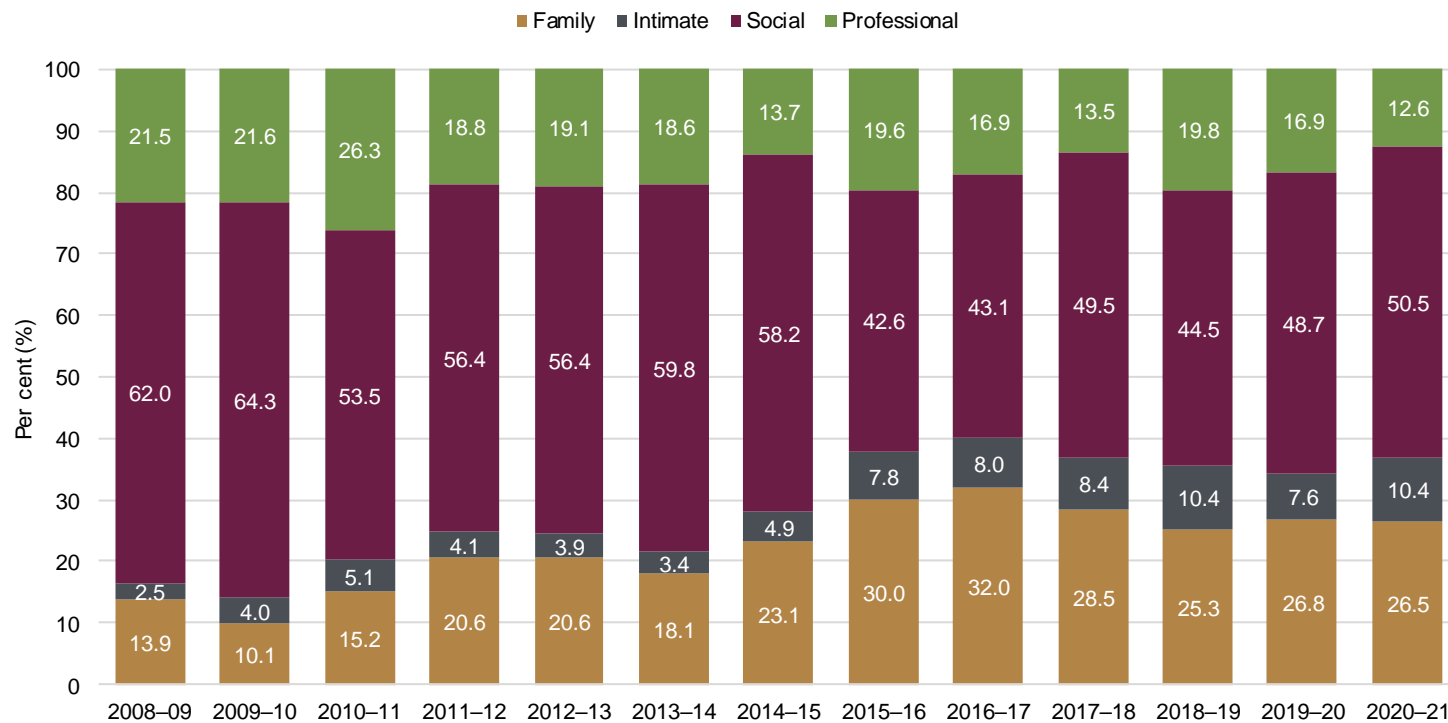
Figure A4 Trend in proportion of victimisations perpetrated by known persons by relationship type, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims



Note: Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged 50 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

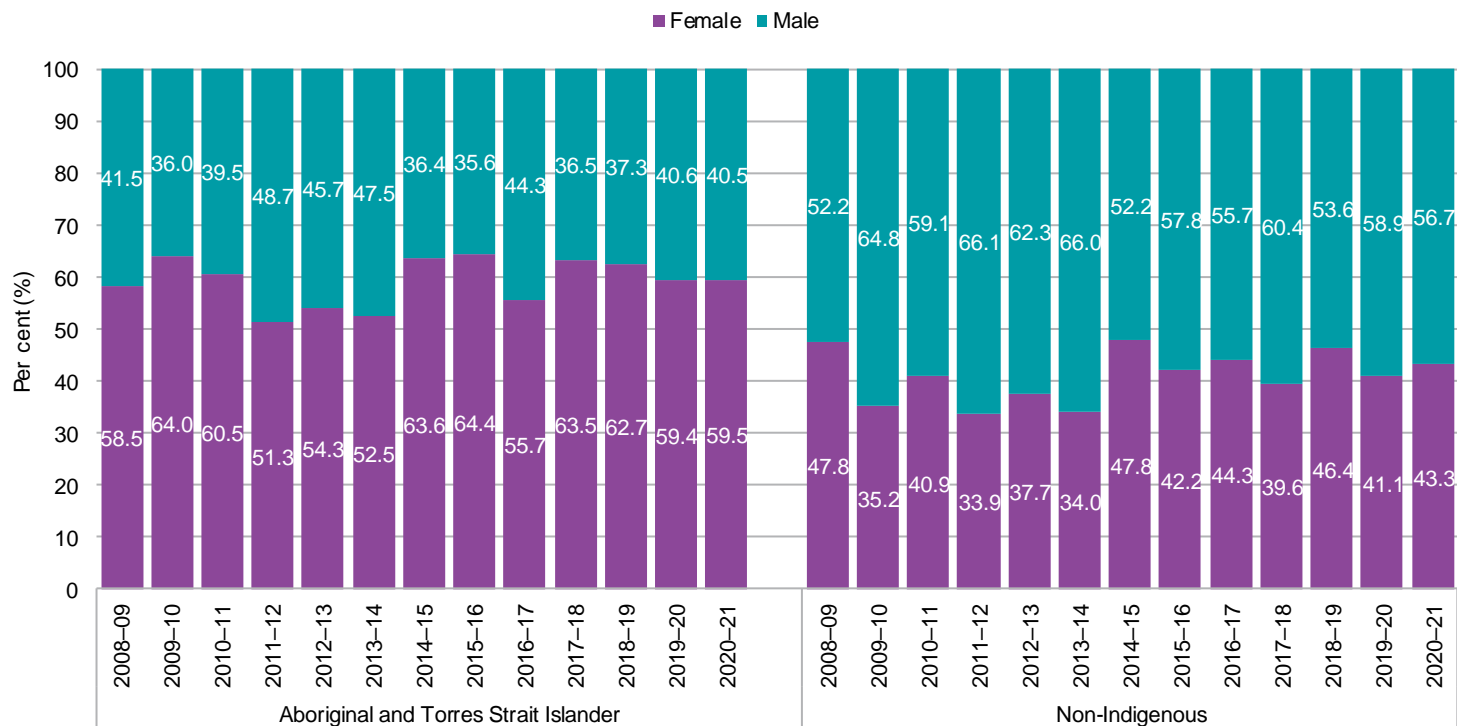
Figure A5 Trend in proportion of victimisations perpetrated by known persons by relationship type, older non-Indigenous victims



Note: Older non-Indigenous victims are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

Figure A6 Trend in proportion of victimisations perpetrated by known persons by gender of victim, older victims

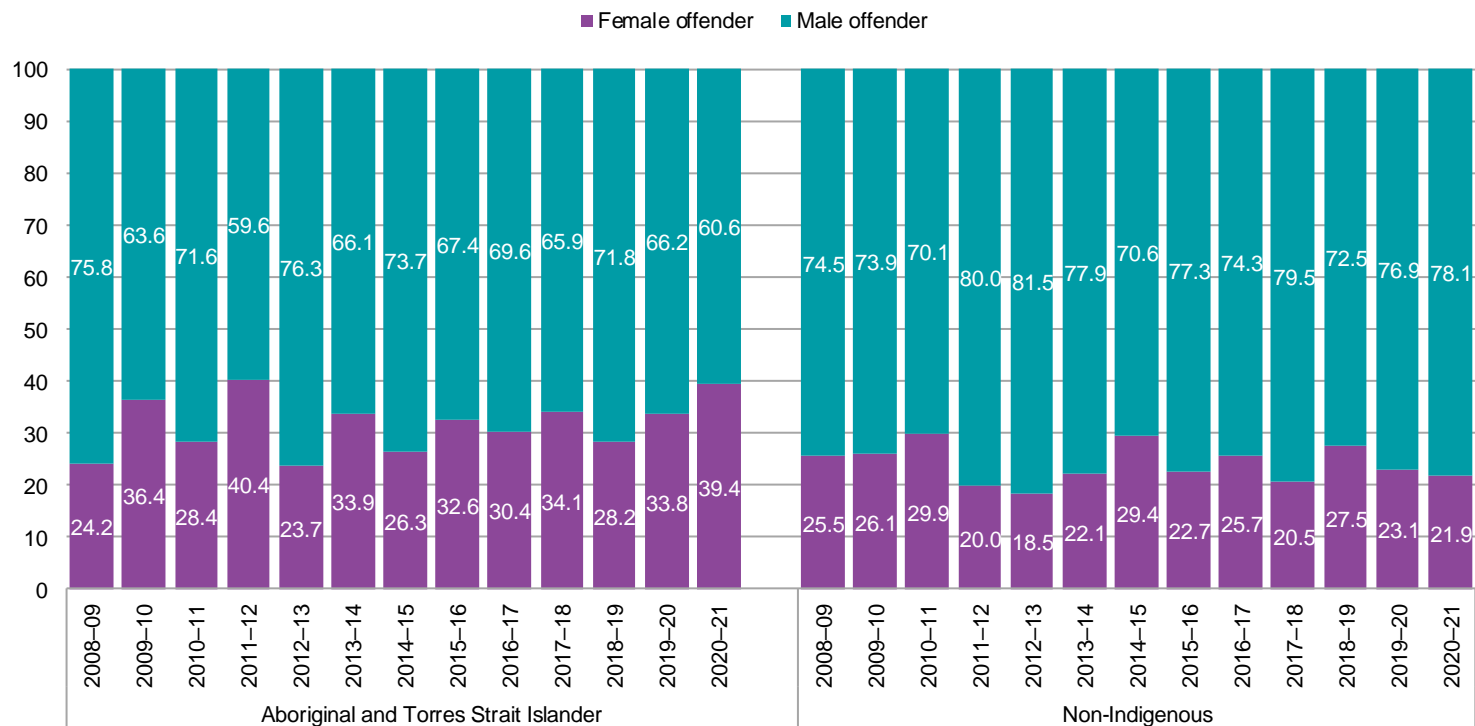


Notes:

1. Victim gender information was missing from one (0.0%) victimisation involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and two (0.1%) involving an older non-Indigenous victim.
2. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged 50 years and over, older non-Indigenous victims are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

Figure A7 Trend in proportion of victimisations perpetrated by known persons by gender of offender, older victims

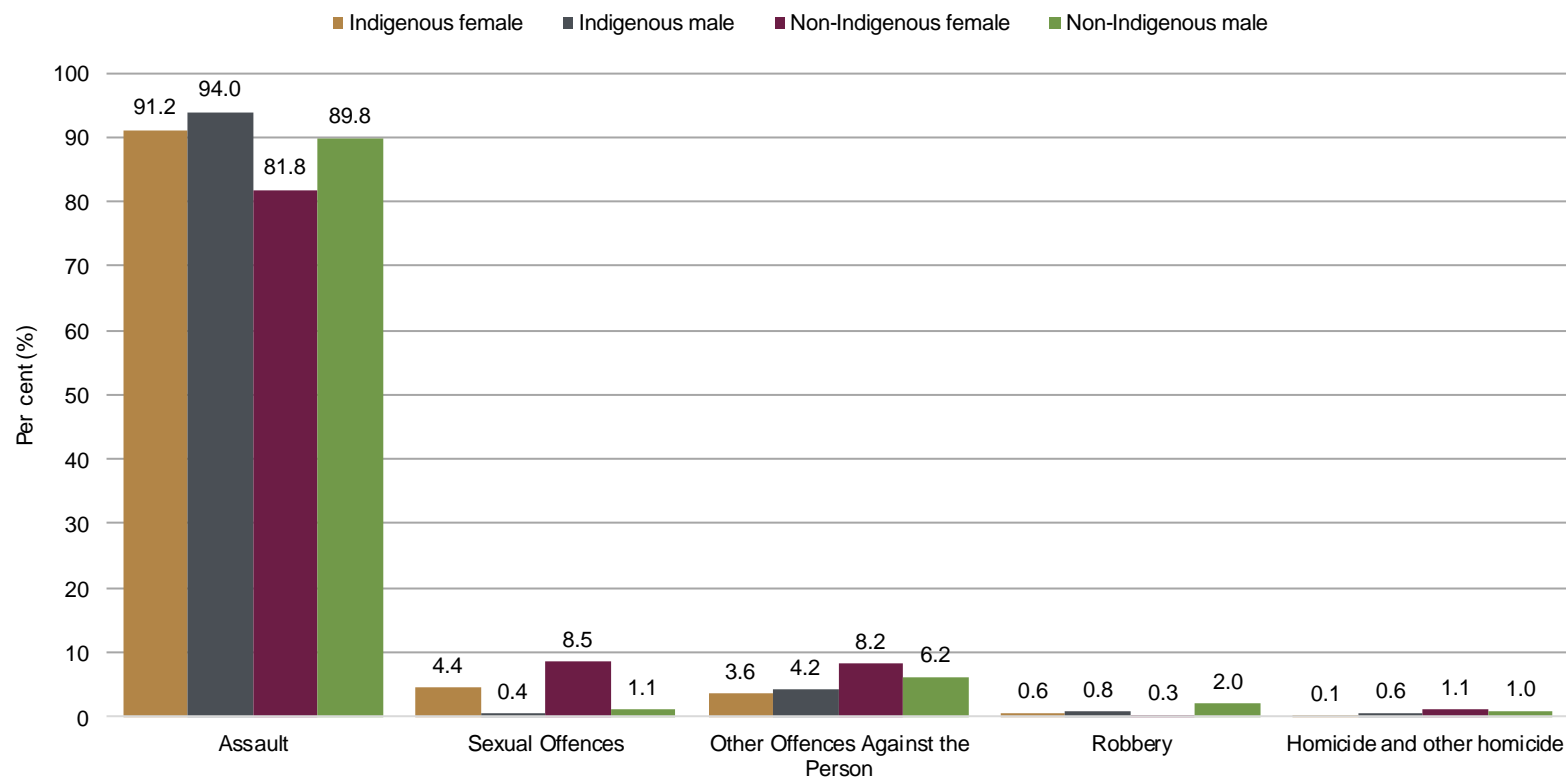


Notes:

- Offender gender information was not recorded for 674 (29.2%) victimisations involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and 1,534 (43.0%) involving an older non-Indigenous victim and were excluded from calculations. This is because offender information is only recorded once an offence is actioned against an offender.
- Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged 50 years and over, older non-Indigenous victims are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.

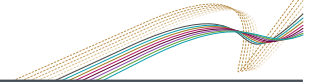
Figure A8 Distribution of victimisations perpetrated by known persons by MSO, older victims, 2008–09 to 2020–21



Notes:

1. Victim gender information was missing from one (0.0%) victimisation involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim and two (0.1%) involving an older non-Indigenous victim and were excluded from calculations.
2. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims are those aged 50 years and over, older non-Indigenous victims are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data.



Appendix B: Supplementary findings – DVO applications

Table B1 Percentage change in DVO applications involving older and younger aggrieved by Indigenous status and relationship context, 2008–09 compared with 2020–21

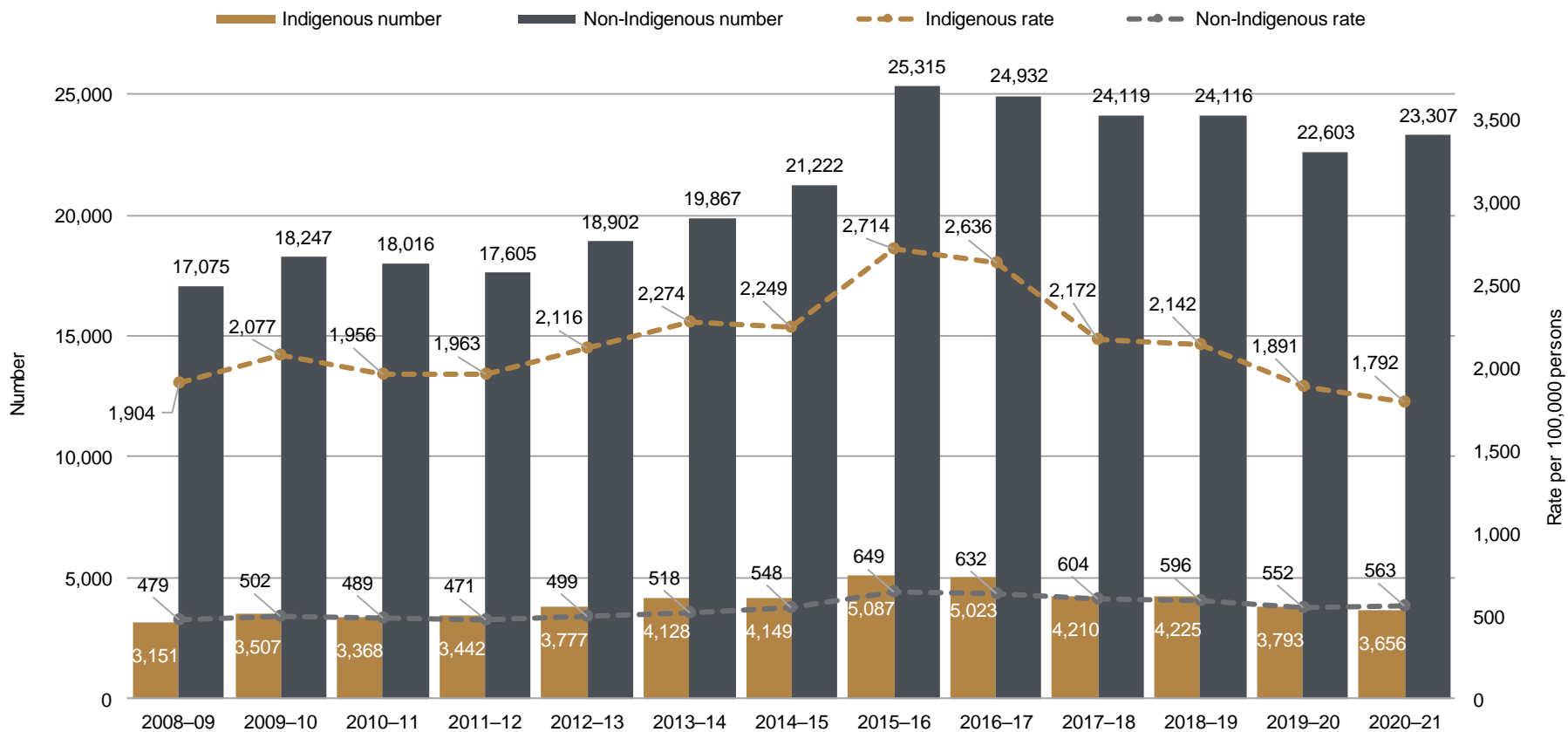
		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander					Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander			
		2008–09	2020–21	% change			2008–09	2020–21	% change	
DVO application involving older people as the aggrieved	All relationships	Rate	200	666	233.0	All relationships	Number	3,151	3,656	16.0
		Rate	924	1,649	78.4		Rate	1,904	1,792	-5.9
	Family	Number	137	485	254.0	Family	Number	700	1,199	71.3
		Rate	633	1,201	89.7		Rate	423	588	38.9
	Intimate	Number	62	180	190.3	Intimate	Number	2,444	2,451	0.3
		Rate	286	446	55.6		Rate	1,477	1,201	-18.7
	Non-Indigenous		2008–09	2020–21	% change	Non-Indigenous		2008–09	2020–21	% change
	All relationships	Number	367	1,033	181.5	All relationships	Number	17,075	23,307	36.5
		Rate	70	124	75.5		Rate	479	563	17.7
	Family	Number	250	767	206.8	Family	Number	2,823	5,090	80.3
		Rate	48	92	91.3		Rate	79	123	55.4
	Intimate	Number	111	256	130.6	Intimate	Number	14,191	18,127	27.7
		Rate	21	31	43.8		Rate	398	438	10.1
	Total		2008–09	2020–21	% change	Total		2008–09	2020–21	% change
All relationships	Number	567	1,699	199.6	All relationships	Number	20,226	26,963	33.3	
Family	Number	387	1,252	223.5	Family	Number	3,523	6,289	78.5	
Intimate	Number	173	436	152.0	Intimate	Number	16,635	20,578	23.7	

Notes:

- Counts for all relationships also include DVO applications involving informal care relationships.
- Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved are those aged 50 years and over while younger aggrieved are those aged under 50 years. Older non-Indigenous aggrieved are those aged 65 years and over while younger aggrieved are those aged under 65 years.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

Figure B1 Number and rate of DVO applications involving younger people as the aggrieved

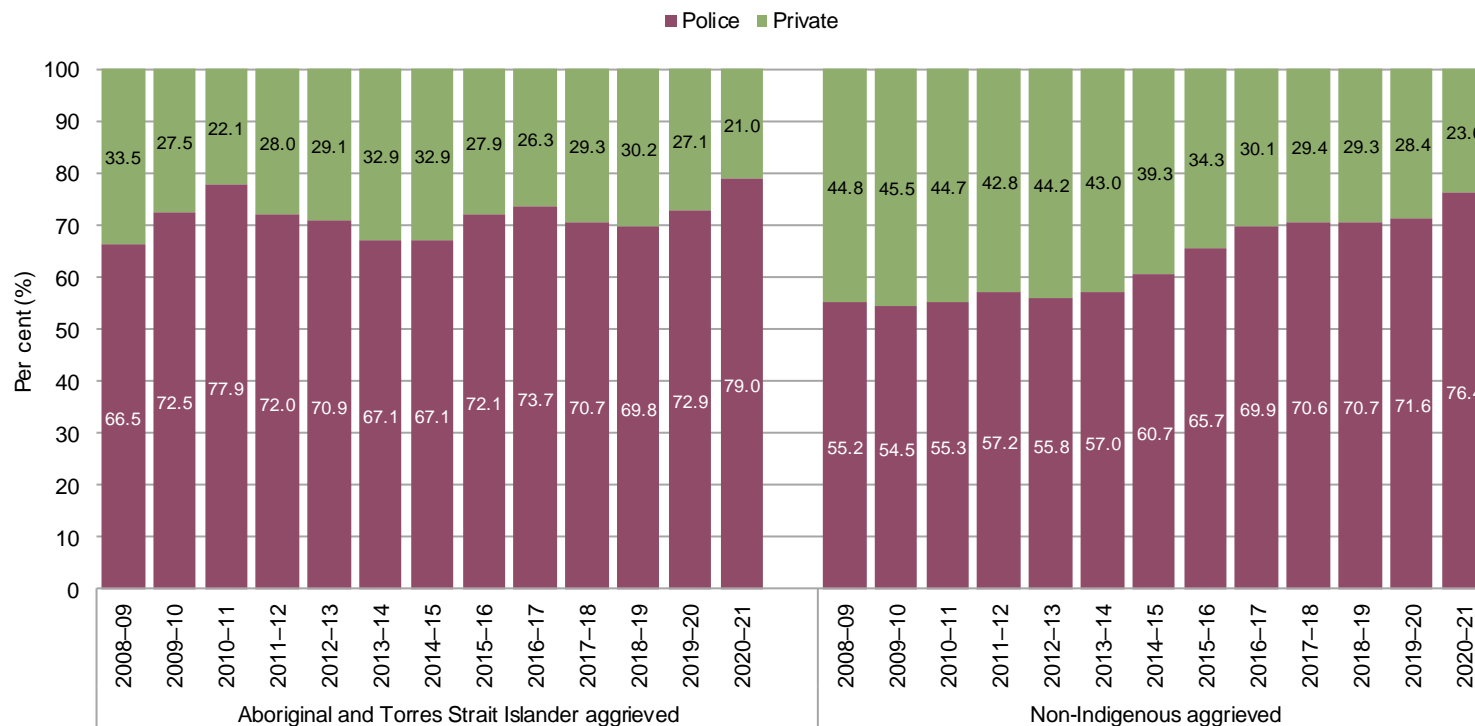


LHS = left hand side RHS = right hand side

Note: Younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved are those aged under 50 years, younger non-Indigenous aggrieved are those aged under 65 years.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG and ABS (2019b; 2021) data.

Figure B2 Trend in proportion of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved by lodgement source

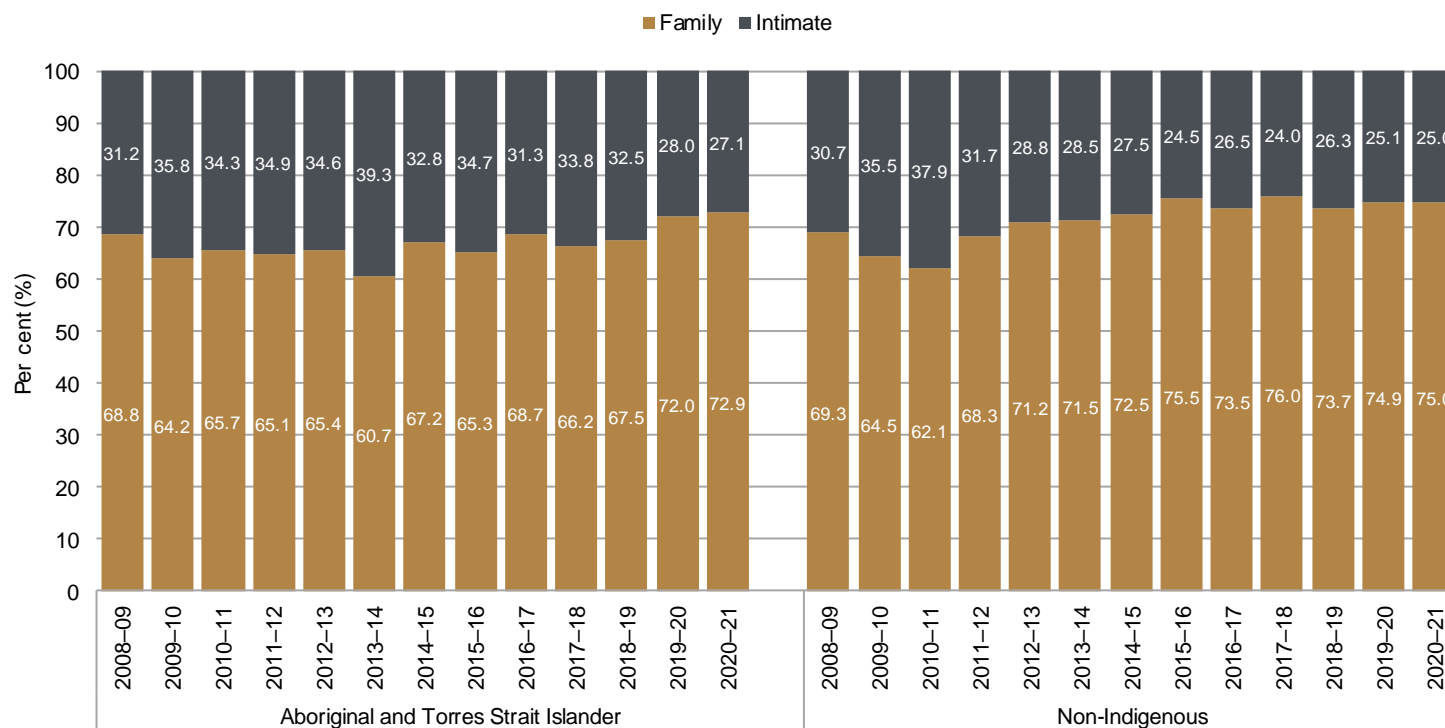


Notes:

1. Proportions exclude DVO applications lodged by other sources which accounted for 0.4% ($n = 29$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.6% ($n = 53$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period.
2. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved are those aged 50 years and over, older non-Indigenous aggrieved are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data.

Figure B3 Trend in proportion of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved by relationship context

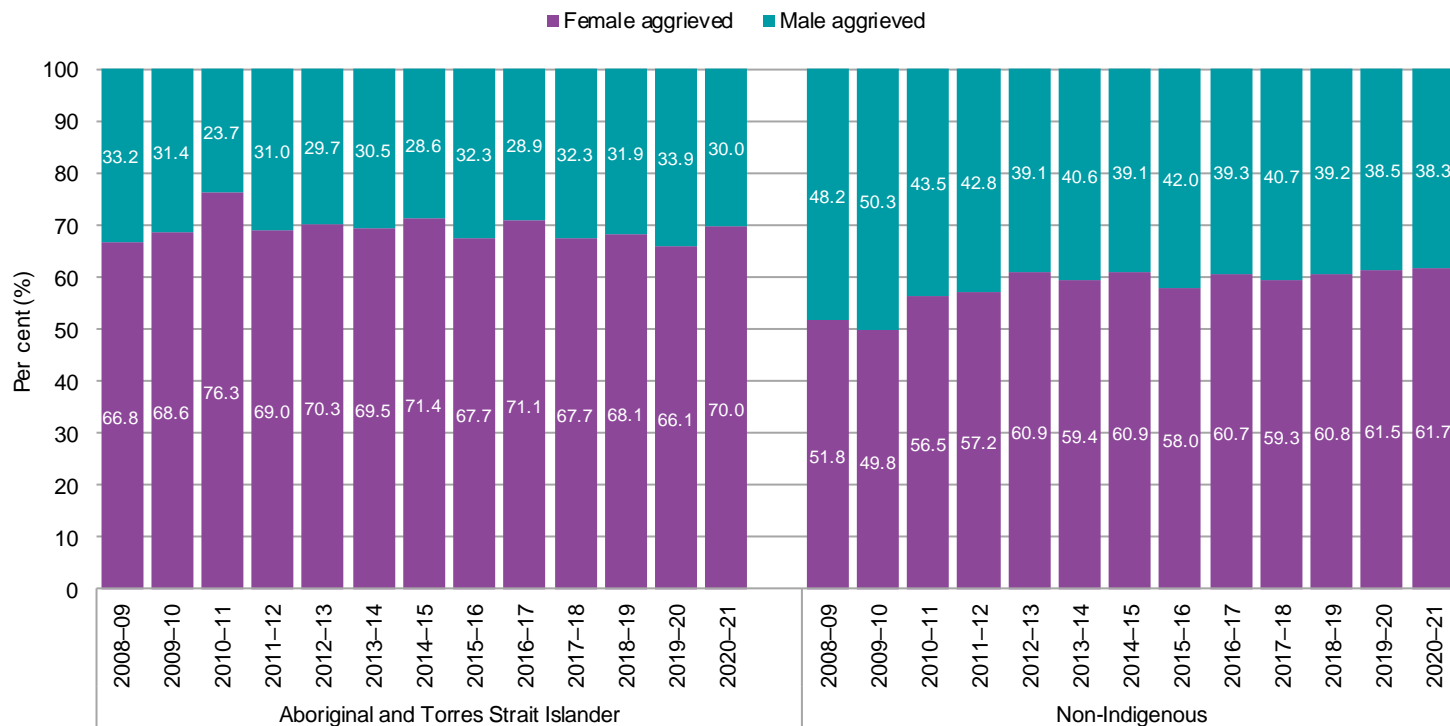


Notes:

1. Proportions exclude DVO applications involving informal care relationships which accounted for 0.4% ($n = 25$) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 1.1% ($n = 101$) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period.
2. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved are those aged 50 years and over, older non-Indigenous aggrieved are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data.

Figure B4 Trend in proportion of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved by aggrieved gender

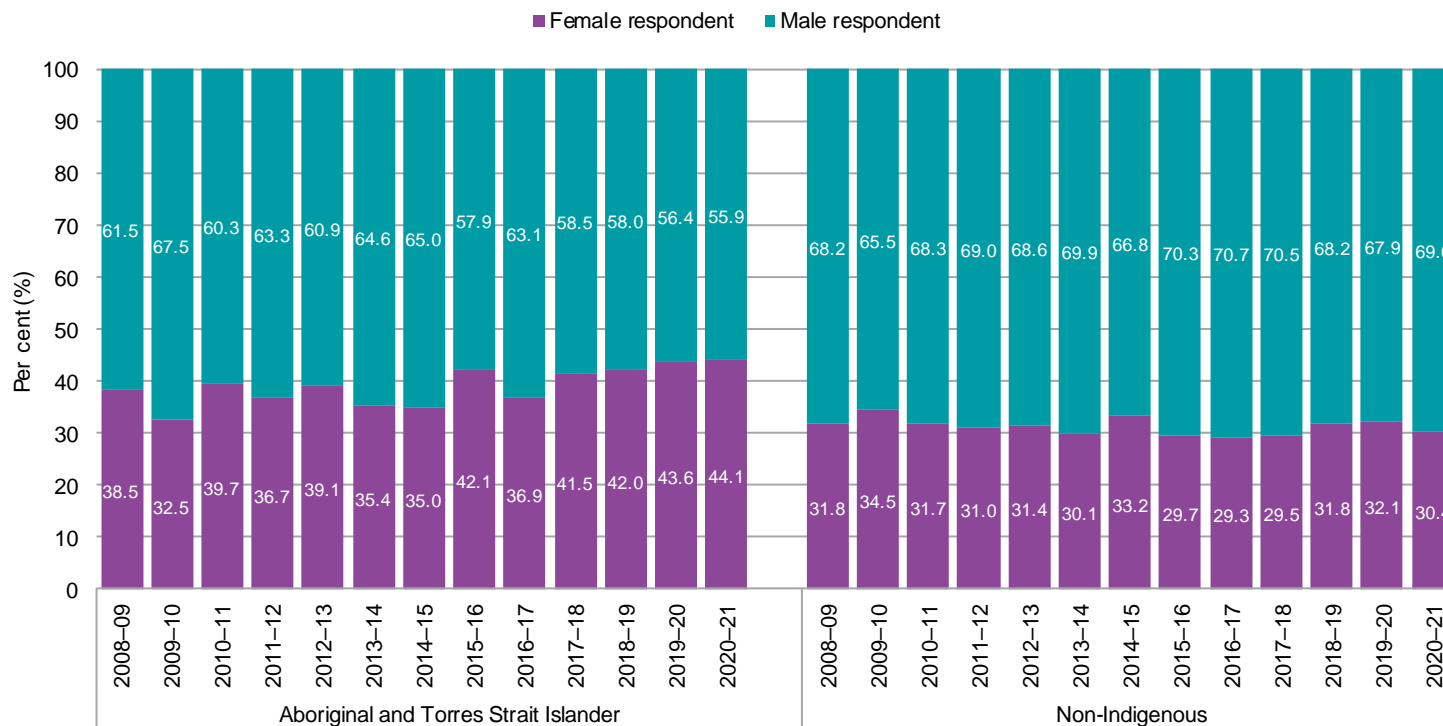


Notes:

1. Aggrieved gender information was missing from 0.1% (n = 4) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.1% (n = 9) of DVO applications involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period.
2. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved are those aged 50 years and over, older non-Indigenous aggrieved are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data.

Figure B5 Trend in proportion of DVO applications involving older people as the aggrieved by respondent gender



Notes:

1. Respondent gender information was missing from 0.1% (n = 4) of DVO applications involving an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved and 0.1% (n = 14) involving an older non-Indigenous aggrieved over the observation period.
2. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved are those aged 50 years and over, older non-Indigenous aggrieved are those aged 65 years and over.

Source: QGSO analysis of DJAG data.

