

## What does men's agreement with Man Box rules mean for violence-supportive attitudes and viewing violent pornography?

The “Man Box” describes a set of beliefs within and across society that place pressure on men to act in a certain way. The Man Box consists of 19 “rules” that represent a rigid, outdated and often harmful template for how a “real man” should think, feel, and behave. These “rules” include statements such as “Men should use violence to get respect if necessary” and “In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage”.

The metaphor of the “Man Box” evokes the idea that this set of rules or norms is rigid and restrictive – it “boxes men in”, and creates limitations and pressures.

We surveyed men aged 18-30 years, and men aged 31-45 years about the Man Box rules. Our study explored the relationship between men personally endorsing Man Box rules and whether they hold attitudes that condone violence against women and deny gender inequality, two key enablers of men's use of violence against women.<sup>1</sup> We also examined links between the Man Box and pornography.

Our 2024 Man Box study has found that men's personal endorsement (agreement) with Man Box rules is linked to hostile attitudes towards women as well as viewing of violent pornography.<sup>2</sup>

There is a diversity of experiences and views among men when it comes to Man Box rules. Our study divided men into five groups (Quintiles) based upon their Man Box composite score. We compare the men who least strongly agree with the Man Box rules (Quintile 1), to the men who most strongly agree (Quintile 5).

### Key findings

*Our study found that as men reported increased agreement with the Man Box rules (moving from Quintile 1 to Quintile 5), there is a consistent increase in their violence supportive attitudes and likelihood of viewing violent pornography. The tables below illustrate this trend. Looking only at men aged 18-30, compared to men who least strongly endorse Man Box rules, men who most strongly endorse them are:*

- **17 times more likely to express violence-supportive attitudes**
- **5 times more likely to deny gender inequality**
- **3 times as likely to report consuming violent pornography in the last six months**

These findings demonstrate clear links between personal endorsement of rigid masculine norms and violence supportive attitudes. They highlight the importance of both engaging men and boys in conversations around gender norms as well as related discussions regarding pornography. These discussions should seek to challenge violence supportive attitudes, including attitudes that mistrust women's reporting of violence and experiences of inequality in Australian society.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>OUR WATCH 2021. Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia. 2nd ed. Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.

<sup>2</sup>Violent pornography is defined as including one or more of the following being done to a woman: pushing or shoving, pulling hair, spanking, gagging, choking, slapping, kicking, punching, bondage or restraint, or forcing sex.

<sup>3</sup>Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023). Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia. (Research report 02/2023). ANROWS.

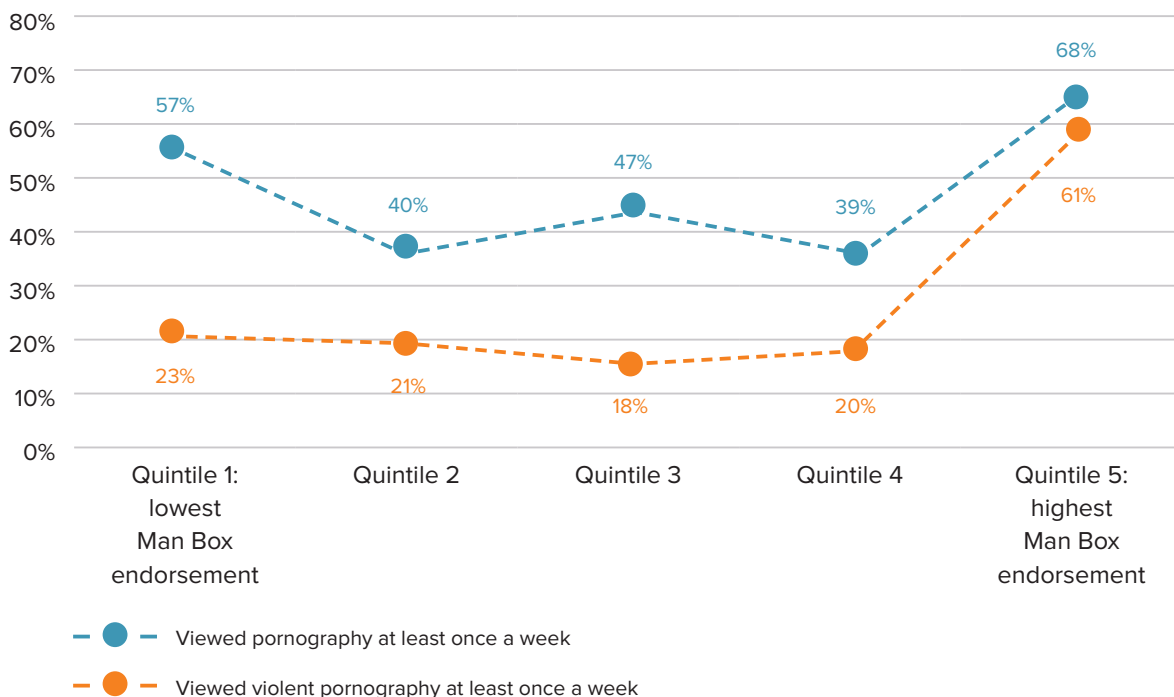
## Proportion of men who agreed with statements which support violence against women or deny gender inequality, by Man Box quintile and age group

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

	Quintile 1: 18-30 year-olds	Quintile 5: 18-30 year-olds	Quintile 1: 31-45 year-olds	Quintile 5: 31-45 year-olds
Many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false	8%	58%	9%	44%
Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family	2%	63%	3%	38%
Sometimes a woman can make a man so angry that he hits her when he didn't mean to	7%	64%	8%	40%
Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia	16%	74%	20%	61%
Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist	19%	63%	26%	50%
Many women don't fully appreciate all that men do for them	12%	69%	21%	55%

## Proportion of respondents who viewed violent pornography in the previous six months, by Man Box quintile, 18-30 year old men

Percentage of respondents who selected any option other than Never



For more information about The Man Box 2024, and to download the full report, visit [www.themanbox.com.au](http://www.themanbox.com.au).

