



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

# Measuring police performance in domestic and family violence

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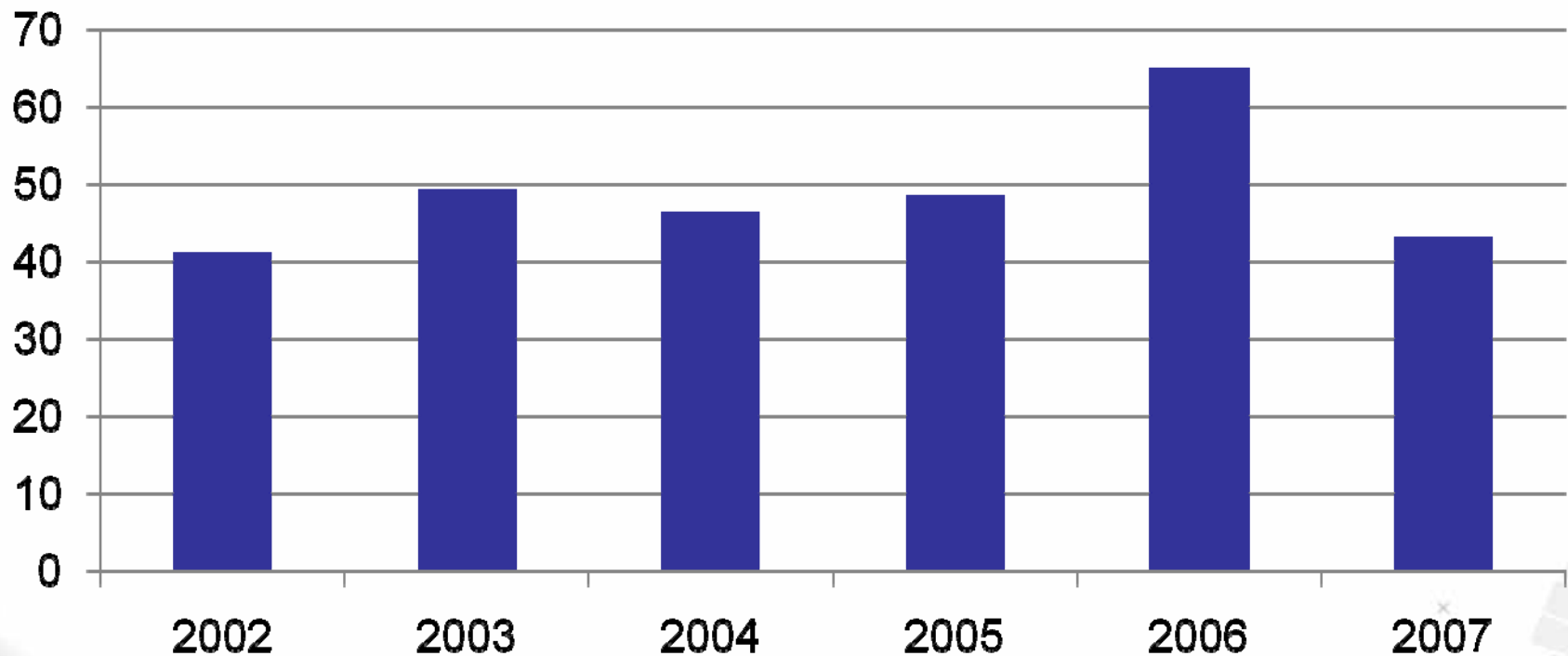


# Domestic and family homicides

- **About one quarter of homicides each year occur between intimate partners and this proportion has remained stable over a number of years**
- **About 40% of homicides each year occur between intimate or family members**
- **The vast majority of victims in intimate homicides are female**



# Intimate partner homicides with a known history of domestic violence (%)



Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, AIC

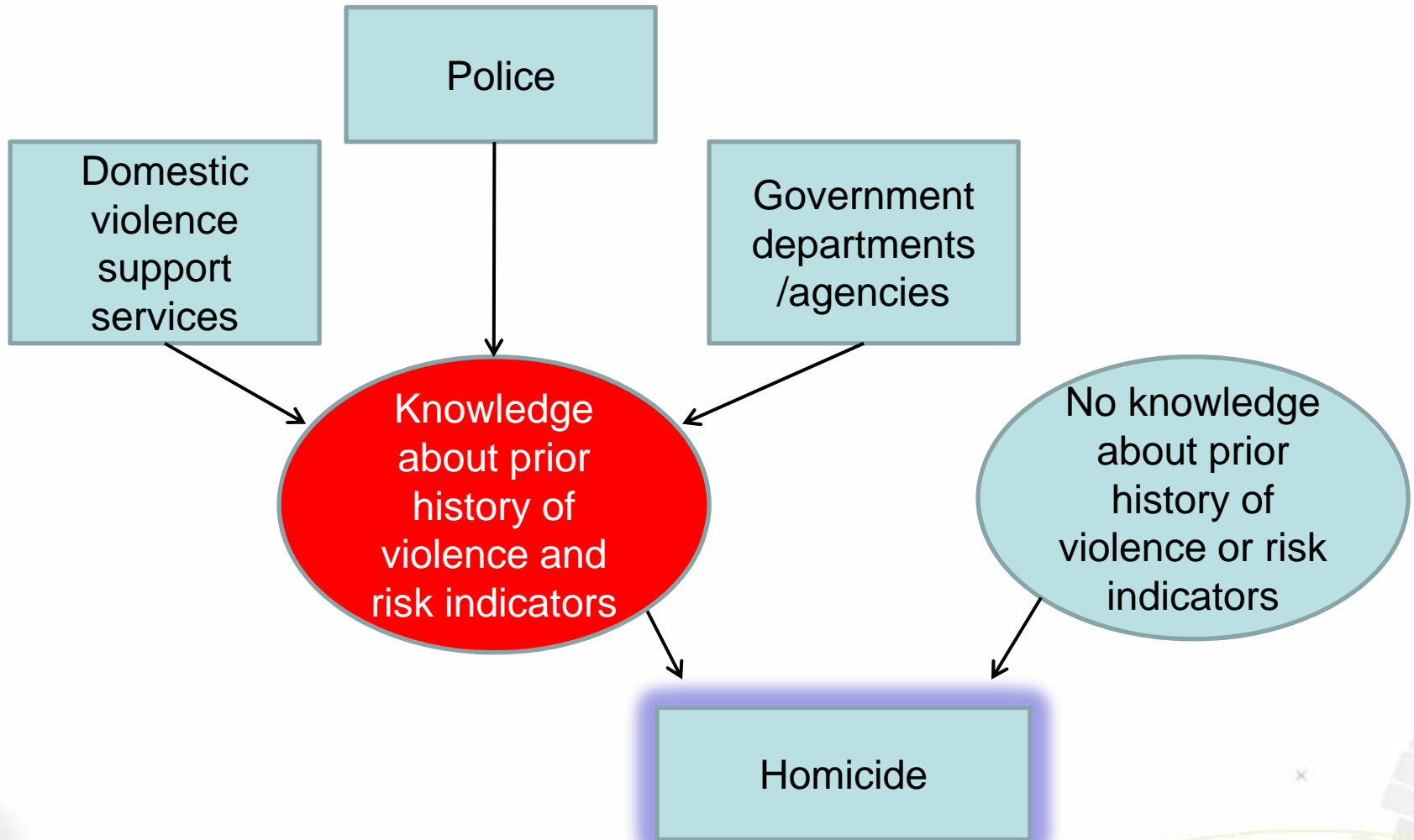


# Many homicides may have been preventable

**Of intimate partner homicides about half involve a known prior history of domestic violence (likely to be underestimate).**

**This suggests that many DV homicides**

- **have early warning indicators**
- **may have been preventable if warning signs had been heeded and intervention steps taken**





# The role of police

- **Police are often the first point of call for many victims of domestic and family violence**
- **Police are therefore in a unique position to know and provide information about reported domestic violence, and to have an impact on violence through their response, intervention and prevention strategies.**
- **They are also in a position to know about and record any known previous histories of violence**
- **Police response needs to be timely, appropriate and effective**



# However this assumes that

- **Information about incidents, victims and offenders is recorded accurately in police systems**
- **The police response to domestic and family violence can be monitored**
- **The effectiveness and appropriateness of police response and interventions can be assessed**



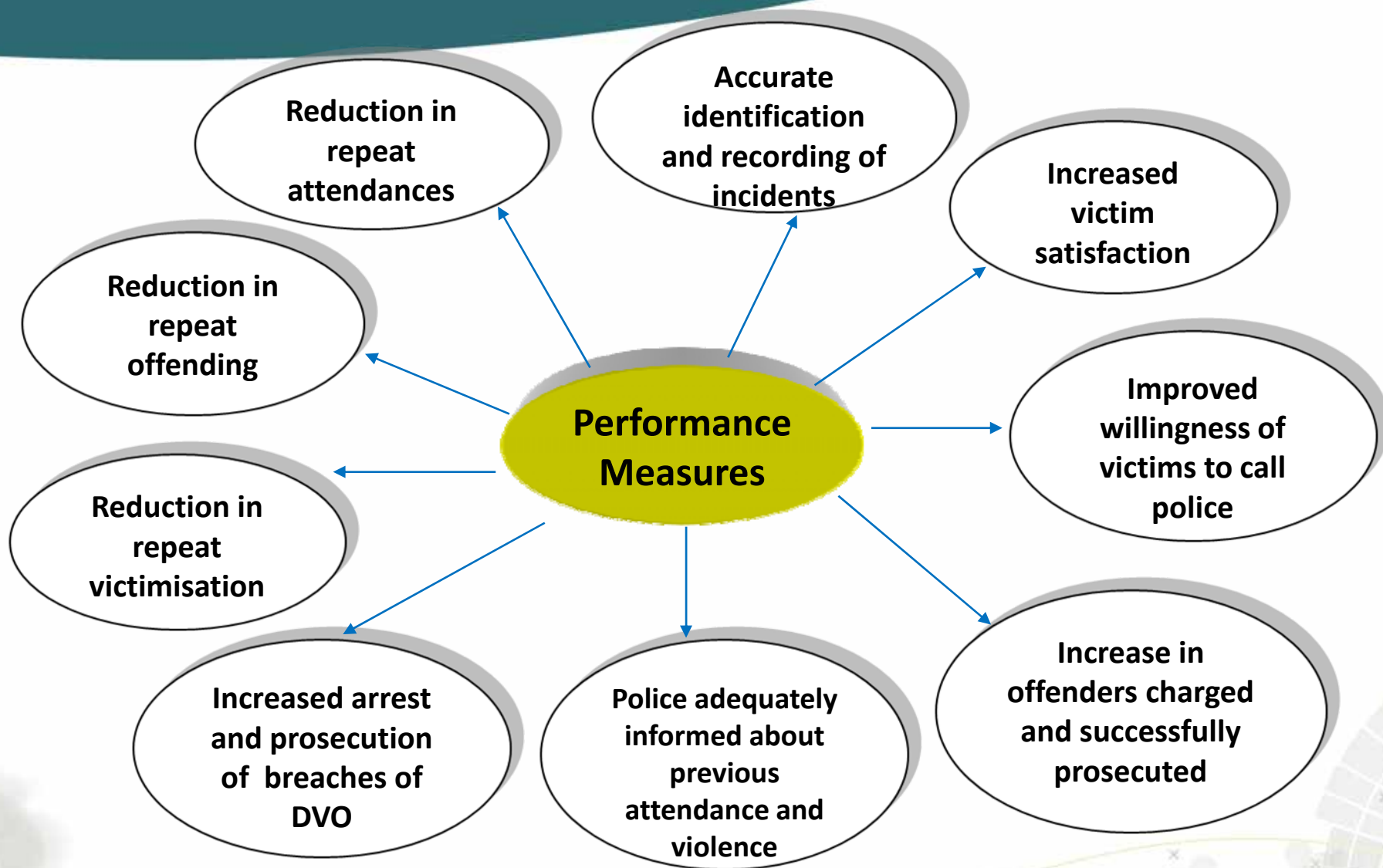
## So...how do police ?

- **Know if their policing strategies are effective in reducing family violence and protecting victims?**
- **Know if they are correctly identifying incidents as domestic or family violence?**
- **Know whether their response to victims is appropriate?**
- **Know whether their evidence collection is adequate?**
- **Encourage victims to come forward and report violence and breaches of protection orders?**
- **Know what operational practices need to be improved, or what they are doing well?**



# Review of ACT Policing family violence data collection processes

- **Involved identifying information needs of stakeholders**
- **Reviewing how FV data are recorded in police systems**
- **Identifying most efficient methods of data extraction**
- **Identifying FV police workload indicators**
- **Examined how police performance in FV could be measured**





# Continuing challenges for police in implementing best practice

- **Under-reporting**
- **Service delivery gaps and consistency of response**
- **Identification, interpretation and accurate recording of incidents**
- **Information sharing to address risk**
- **Training & organisational ‘complacency’**



# Under-reporting

- **This applies to both victims and police**
- **3600 calls for police in ACT – almost triple for DVCS**
- **It's happened before....**
- **Police focus on safety but also prosecution – does this reduce likelihood of calls for help?**
- **Many FV incidents not initially reported/identified as such – requires intuition and interpretation of individual officers.**
- **Changing definitions of FV relationships & offences a constant educational challenge**



# Service delivery, consistent responses & data integrity

- **The realities of response policing models**
- **Same clients – different police**
- **The realities of police workforce demographics**
- **The realities of police procedure**
- **The realities of police data & the argument between ‘investigating’ and ‘reporting’**



# Information sharing to address risk

- **Inter-agency information sharing continues to be cumbersome – even in 2008.**
- **Compatible digital exchange?**
- **Police respect jurisdictional borders – offenders don't.**
- **The problem with preventing crime...**



# Training & organisational complacency

- **Train Train Train**
- **But how effective is it?**
- **Training vs Doing**
- **Train some more – the realities of demands on police time**
- **Organisational complacency: “We’ve got this sorted” – how to keep the spotlight on a continuing problem?**



# Conclusions

- **To know whether policing strategies are appropriate and effective, performance measures are necessary**
- **But there are operational and logistical obstacles and challenges which can inhibit or prevent the implementation of best practice in policing domestic and family violence**
- **The collaboration between the AIC and ACT Policing is an excellent example of how researchers and police both can, and need to, work together towards achieving goals and overcoming operational obstacles**



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