

How do perceptions of safety vary across Victoria between women and men

Women's Health Atlas Education Resource

Learning intentions

Students will:

- use the Victorian Women's Health Atlas (The Atlas), along with other forms of data to identify and analyse perceptions of safety across Victoria
- create an infographic on key findings of Victorian's perceptions of safety
- conduct fieldwork surveys to explore perceptions of safety in their school or local community.

Key inquiry questions

How do perceptions of safety vary across Victoria between women and men?

What influences how safe people feel?

How safe or unsafe is Victoria?

How safe do students feel at my school or in my community? Does this differ for girls and boys? (or is it likely to?)

Key vocabulary

- Spatial association
- Spatial distribution
- Spatial variation
- Perception of safety / perceived safety

Time required

Approximately 3-5 hours

Materials

- Projector / TV
- Individual access to a computer
- Individual copies of Student Worksheet 3.1 – Perceptions of safety
- Individual copies of Fieldwork and Mapping Task 3.2 – Perceptions of safety

Prior knowledge

It is recommended that students have completed Inquiry 1: Navigating the Victorian Women's Health Atlas.

Readiness checklist

Refer to the Series overview – Teacher Notes

Teacher feedback survey

Feedback is vital to ensure the resource meets teaching and learning requirements in Geography.

After using the resource with students, teachers are invited to complete this feedback survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WomensHealthAtlas_GeographyResource

The results will be shared with the resource project partners to inform ongoing updates:

- Women's Health Victoria (WHV)
- Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria (GTAV)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Sensitive content

Before proceeding with this topic, please refer to the **Readiness checklist - sensitive content** (in the Series overview) to ensure you have the necessary support in place.

To best deliver this subject, teachers should aim for the session to be co-delivered by someone with a strong understanding in violence against women and gender equality. This may include a teacher who is delivering the respectful relationships curriculum in your school or you may wish to invite a representative from your local women's health service to support discussion in this session.

Find your local women's health service:

- Regional services: <https://whv.org.au/resources/whv-publications/victorian-women%E2%80%99s-health-program-services-lgas-statewides-and-regional>
- Metropolitan services: <https://whv.org.au/resources/whv-publications/victorian-women%E2%80%99s-health-program-services-lgas-metropolitan-areas-map>

Starter

Ask the class if they go out in their city, their town or neighbourhood at night without adults. Ask them to **think** about the things that they might do to stay safe. Firstly, ask the boys to **share** their ideas. Now ask the girls to share what they might do to stay safe, now and in the future (suggestions include not walking down laneways, not walking alone, calling a friend while walking home, not wear headphones or listen to loud music, crossing the street away from a big group of guys, thinking about what you are wearing, making sure a friend stays sober to help everyone get home safely, never leaving a drink unattended, avoid eye contact with strange men on the street, keys in fist).

If you teach in a single-sex school, modify the above activity so that you determine how the other gender might feel. Alternatively, build in time so that your students can speak to family and friends of the opposite sex and ask them about how they stay safe when they go out alone or without adults.

Hopefully these discussions will start to get everyone thinking about how men and women have different perceptions of safety. (Obviously these students are underage and drinking alcohol should not be encouraged. However, teenagers will take risks and it is probably better to help them make appropriate and safe choices for when they are older and engaging in this sort of behaviour).

Teachers should be aware of carefully framing the discussion so that the responsibility does not fall on victims. For example, victims should not change their behaviour in order to feel safe. Everyone has a right to be safe and the responsibility to make others feel safe.

Main activities

1. Show this clip to students:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-08/digital-map-shows-where-women-feel-unsafe-in/8105108>

Discuss the issues in the video. Prompt questions might include:

- Why do men feel entitled to do this?
- Have you found there are areas that you have felt unsafe in at night (or even during the day)?
- How is technology being used to help people feel safe?
- How useful do you think a project like this could be?

2. Shared reading. Provide students with this article:

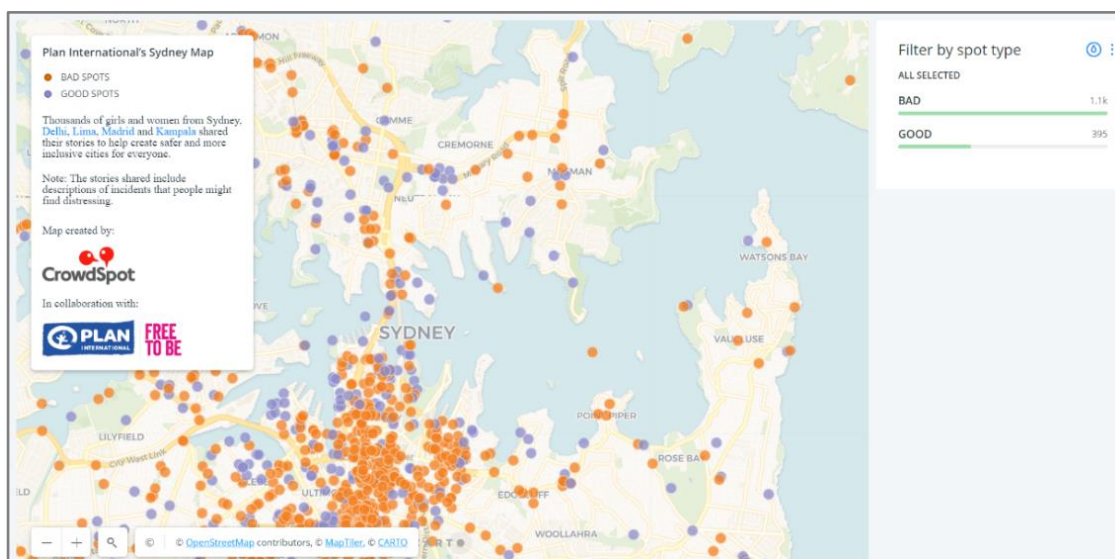
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-08/free-to-be-online-map-shows-where-women-in-melbourne-feel-unsafe/8103410>

- Have them read through it silently - they should highlight key words, underline the main points and put question marks around anything they would like clarified.
- Partner the students up and have them share their markings. Have they highlighted the same words? Can they clarify anything for each other? Do they have the same main points?
- As a class discuss the article.

3. Have students explore Sydney's map (Melbourne map is not currently available):

<https://crowdspot.carto.com/builder/5b579455-6e9c-4df1-a79e-a8e4c375a77b/embed>

- 'Bad spots' are shown in orange, 'good spots' in purple.
If students click on a spot it will bring up a description.
(Note: The stories shared include descriptions of incidents that people might find distressing.)
- You could have students describe the spatial distribution of the spots, or just allow them to explore the map freely – they are likely to notice concentrations of dots in certain areas.



4. Explore The Atlas map.

Go to <https://victorianwomenshealthatlas.net.au>

Select the Priority Health Area:
'Violence Against Women'

Select the indicator: 'Perceptions of Safety'

Select the measure: '% People who feel safe when walking alone at night'

Have students complete Student Worksheet
3.1 - Perceptions of Safety

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is experienced by a significant number of women in Australia despite it being preventable. For Victorian women aged between 15 and 44 years, intimate partner violence is the leading cause of preventable death, disability and illness. The impact of violence against women is widespread and long-standing, generating profound personal, social and economic costs to individuals, the community and our nation. Specific groups of women are particularly at risk of violence due to the interplay of a number of complex factors, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse women. Having the confidence, knowledge and ability to seek support and access appropriate services is also difficult for many women.

Select an Indicator to view the Atlas

[Perceptions Of Safety](#)

% People who feel safe when walking alone at night

[Sexual Offences](#)

[Sexual Offences Relationship To Victim](#)

[Stalking, Harassment And Threatening Behaviours](#)

[Family Violence](#)

[Intimate Partner Violence](#)

[Family Violence, Child Present](#)

5. Using the Victorian Women's Health Atlas (The Atlas) have students come up with at least seven statistics on perceptions of safety (such as 4/10 women feel safe at night, while 8/10 men do).

- Include a location in the statistic chosen. Note – it often makes it easier to understand to round up or down, and to talk about it in terms of people out of ten.
- Students should then use Canva or a similar program to make an infographic of their information. <https://www.canva.com/create/infographics/>

6. Have students complete the 'Fieldwork and Mapping Task' of the perceived safety of the school.

Here is a video on choropleth maps if required <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkmAiINPdrI>

(Note - this could easily be turned into a graded fieldwork report. At Year 10 it's a good idea to have them complete a modified VCE structure in preparation for VCE).

Plenary

- What is being done to improve safety?
- Have students explore what is being done to improve safety in Victoria and their local LGA. Refer to the Resources section for some ideas and programs.
- What can be done to make men and women feel and be equally safe?

Differentiation

For less able students:

Pair these students up for the infographic task. You may also want to start them off with some (or all) statistics.

For more able students:

Have students complete the extension task in the '*Perceptions of safety*' worksheet. Encourage these students to really explore the 'why?' – Why do women feel less safe than men? Why are some areas less safe? Why is there such variation across Victoria? Provide them with some additional reading.

Suggested adaptations

1. You could have the students watch the clip and read the article as homework. They could then use them to have a Socratic Seminar.
2. For the mapping task students could widen this to the broader community. They could create a questionnaire (if you use an online platform you could letterbox drop and possibly reach more people) and survey the community to find out which areas are unsafe. Use this data to create a choropleth map. The class could then make recommendations to the local council to improve perceptions of safety.

Further reading

Williams V (2018) Here's a running list of things women unconsciously do to protect themselves from assault. *Scary Mommy [Blog]* (Oct 1). Available at: <https://www.scarymommy.com/how-women-protect-themselves-sexual-assault/>

Criado-Perez C (2019) The deadly truth about a world built for men: from stab vests to car crashes. *The Guardian* (Feb 23). Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/feb/23/truth-world-built-for-men-car-crashes>

Women's Health Victoria (2020) Making Space For Women [Campaign]. Women's Health Victoria. Melbourne. Available at: <https://whv.org.au/our-focus/making-space-women>

Green B (2018) What women really want: safer communities. *Trust Journal (Victorian Women's Trust)* (Dec 31). Available at: <https://www.vwt.org.au/investing-in-safety-for-women-and-girls/>

(2020) Socratic seminar. Facing History and Ourselves. Available at: <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/socratic-seminar>

STUDENT WORKSHEET 3.1

Perceptions of safety

Go to the Victorian Women's Health Atlas website: <https://victorianwomenshealthatlas.net.au>

TASK A

Select the Priority Health Area 'Violence Against Women'

Select the indicator 'Perceptions of Safety'

Click on the measure '% People who feel safe when walking alone at night'


This should bring up the state map.

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Questions

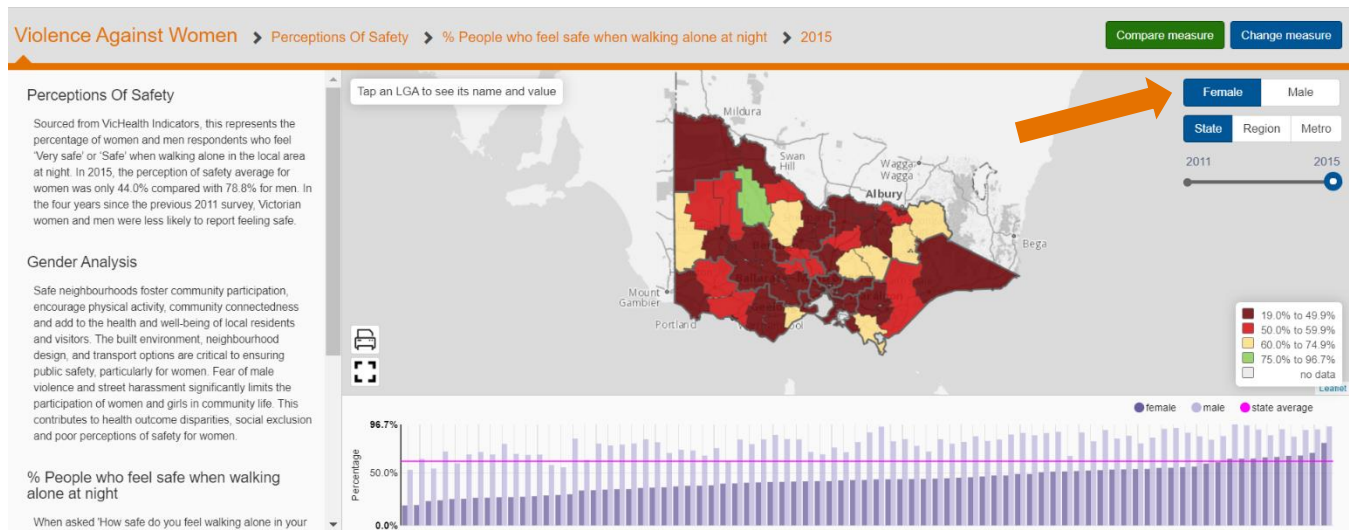
- A1. In which LGA do women feel safest when walking alone at night?
- A2. What percentage of women feel safe in your LGA?
- A3. Describe the spatial distribution of perceptions of safety in Victoria for women (you may want to use a PQE method to complete this – see the instructions in Inquiry 2 – Community connections).
- A4. Why do you think there are differences (spatial variation) between areas?
- A5. On average, what percentage of women feel safe when walking alone at night in Victoria? (hint: read the information on the left of the map screen).

TASK B

Compare the results for male and female.

Click 'Male' to see how safe men feel.

Alternatively, use the 'Compare measure' green button to view the 'Female' map alongside the 'Male' map.



Questions

- B1. What do you notice about how men perceive their safety when walking alone at night?
- B2. What percentage of men feel safe in your LGA?
- B3. On average, what percentage of men feel safe when walking alone at night in Victoria?
- B4. Describe the spatial distribution of perceptions of safety in Victoria for men (you may want to use a PQE method to complete this – see the instructions in Inquiry 1).
- B5. Compare your two descriptions of women's perceptions and men's perceptions.
- B6. Describe the spatial association between women's and men's perceptions of safety in Victoria (or within your region).

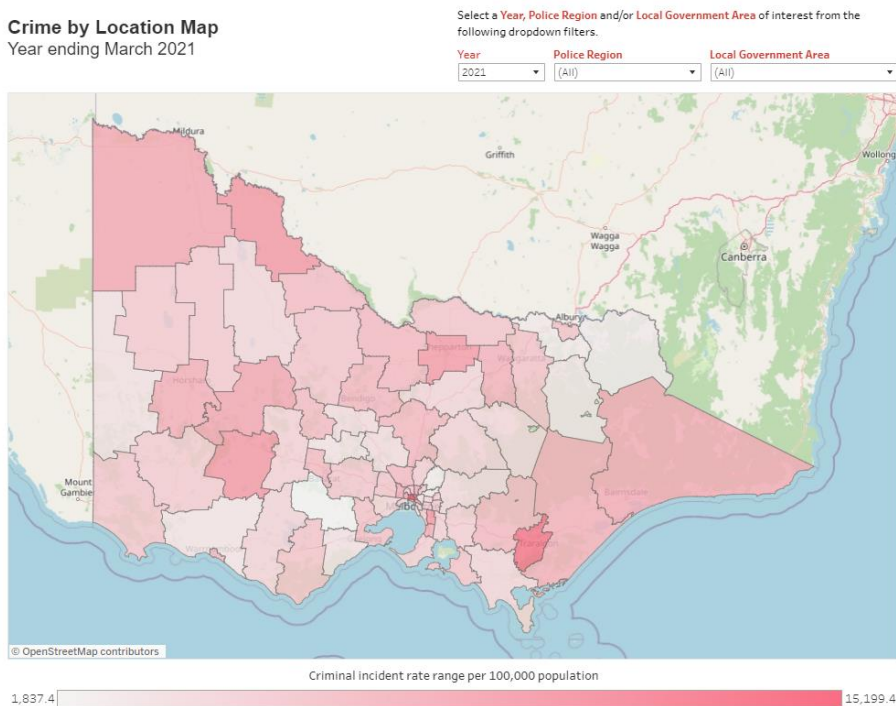
TASK C

Compare perceptions of safety to actual crime rates.

Go to: <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data-by-area>

This shows all reported criminal incidents in Victoria, by local government area.

The data is updated quarterly.



- C1. Use the PQE method once again to explain the spatial distribution of crime for the latest available year.
- C2. Does this match your description of perceptions of safety from the Women's Health Atlas (i.e. do people feel more unsafe in areas of higher crime)?
- C3. Account for any differences you may find.

EXTENSION TASK

Explore other Atlas indicators within the Violence Against Women priority area (such as 'Sexual Offences', 'Sexual Offences Relationship to Victim' or 'Stalking, Harassment and Threatening Behaviours').

Does the data support women's perceptions?

Questions for discussion

1. Do you think Victoria is safe or unsafe? Justify your response based on your findings.
2. Do you think women's perception of safety is justified?
3. Why are some areas perceived as less safe than others?
4. What do you think could be done to improve perceived safety? Are there any programs apart from the 'Free To Be' app? Consider education about norms – entitled to be safe; gender equity bystander training; consulting women about the design of public spaces.
5. What could men do to improve women's perception of safety?

FIELDWORK AND MAPPING TASK 3.2

Perceptions of safety

1. Obtain or create a map of your school – it should include buildings and grounds (Google Earth or Google Maps are a good start).

2. Divide the map into zones or sections.

This zone map should accompany the survey so that respondents know which areas students are referring to.

Include access to the school and areas just outside the school boundaries.
(e.g.: bus stops, car parks, footpaths, crossings, main roads, adjacent land)

3. Create survey questions for students regarding their safety at school.

A survey sample has been provided.

4. As a class conduct the surveys.

It is recommended that students work in pairs and have a minimum number of responses to collect.

It is important to obtain data from a cross section of the student body – both sexes and all year levels.

Choose an appropriate time to collect data (during recess or lunch might garner a good range of responses)

5. To make compilation of results easier, use a platform such as Google Forms.

Have students input their results (one entry per response). The class can then share the data.

(As a teacher using Google Forms allows you to view the responses in graph form, but also to download as an Excel file to really examine the data).

Have students look at the raw data to analyse the differences between sexes and grades.

6. Analyse the data and look for patterns and trends. Try to work out what story the data is trying to tell.

Answer these questions to help with the analysis:

- a. Who feels least safe – males or females? (provide % for each)
- b. Which area(s) do students feel least safe in?
- c. Which area(s) do students feel most safe in?
- d. From which grade(s) do students feel less safe?
- e. From which grade(s) do students feel most safe?
- f. In which area(s) do girls feel least safe?
- g. In which area(s) do boys feel least safe?

7. Use the data to create a choropleth map.

This could be using the data as a whole, or breaking it down into sex and year level data.

Ideally have students create different ones so you have a range of maps.

e.g.: two students look at girls in Year 9,
two students look at boys in Year 7 etc. and
two students to complete overall maps.

8. As a class, decide on the legend categories for your map.

Suggestions:

- a. For each zone calculate the predominant rating out of 5 (1: very unsafe to 5: very safe) and colour accordingly (remember that a choropleth map uses shades of the one colour - dark normally indicating a greater density of something).
- b. Another idea is to use the data to work out a safety percentage for each zone and then divide it into categories of 0–19%, 20–39% etc., again colouring each one accordingly).

9. Complete a gallery walk to compare the maps.

Put up all the maps and go around to view them all

What commonalities do students notice?

Draw conclusions from the data.

10. Have the class come up with a list of recommendations to the principal to improve school safety.

Example survey questions

How safe is your school?

A survey of school safety.

What is your sex?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other:

What grade are you in?

- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11
- Year 12

Overall, how safe do you feel at school?

1 2 3 4 5

Very unsafe Very safe

How safe do you feel in the following areas? *

	Very unsafe	Unsafe	Neither unsafe nor safe	Safe	Very safe
Zone 1 - basketball courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zone 2 - Canteen area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zone 3 - Lockers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zone 4 - Bike sheds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zone 5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zone 6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there some times during the school day that you feel less safe?

- Before school
- Recess
- Lunch
- After school
- Other:

Are there any other places or times that you feel unsafe at school?

Is there anything else you would like to add about safety at school?

Include a question about trends, for example:

Is safety at your school:

- increasing
- decreasing
- stable

Explain your answer.