



Government of Western Australia
Department of Communities



Stronger Together:

WA's Plan for Gender Equality



Acknowledgement of Country

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

We particularly acknowledge the caring strengths, resilience and central role of Aboriginal women within their families.

Language

Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context.





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Premier's message

I am very proud to present Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality, a long-term coordinated approach to addressing gender inequality in Western Australia. It provides a road map not just for Government, but for businesses, communities and individuals.

The data tells us that women in Western Australia are still at considerable risk of violence and abuse, and we continue to have a significant gender pay gap. This is unacceptable and our State risks being left behind if we don't take action.

The evidence is clear - if we address gender inequality, Western Australians will share in the resulting economic and social benefits.

Gender inequality continues to affect our whole community. It is everyone's responsibility to help build a stronger, equal future for WA.

Hon Mark McGowan MLA
Premier



Minister's message

Stronger Together is the first plan of its kind for Western Australia. Every woman and girl has the right to reach her full potential in all aspects of life - at school, in the workplace, in retirement, and in their homes and communities.

The development of this road map was informed by consultations held across the State. These conversations provided invaluable opportunities for the Western Australian community to discuss gender inequality and what it means to them. The issues raised by Western Australians during these discussions made it clear that things need to change.

Women continue to experience high levels of domestic and sexual violence. They are still being overlooked for leadership roles. And they continue to bear the majority of domestic work.

Despite this, the other overwhelming message from the Western Australian community was that they hold a lot of hope for the future.

It is time to genuinely progress gender equality in our State, and Government cannot do it alone. We need sustained action from every part of the community and this plan sets out priority areas to focus our efforts.

Hon Simone McGurk MLA
Minister for Women's Interests

Time for action



Western Australia is home to a modern, energetic and competent population and we need to maximise that potential. Empowering everyone to fully participate in all aspects of society is the smart thing to do.



Please be bold and courageous. Do not shy away from the challenging conversations. Thank you for doing this. I already feel a tiny bit safer and hopeful for the future :)



Survey respondent

Western Australians have been actively participating in the growing global momentum for gender equality and women's rights, including the women's marches and the #metoo and #timesup campaigns. The community has sent a clear message that more action is needed to achieve gender equality.

Too many women are still experiencing family and domestic violence, as well as sexual violence and assault. Women continue to be under-represented in leadership roles across almost all sectors, despite being well qualified and eager to lead. The gender pay gap and time taken out of the workforce for caring responsibilities mean that women are vulnerable to poverty and homelessness. This can lead to a cycle of disadvantage across generations.

There is powerful evidence that gender equality makes good business sense and will contribute to a strong economy for our State. Gender equality benefits everyone, including men, and contributes to stronger families and communities. It is everyone's responsibility to take a stand for gender equality and it's time to work together to build a stronger Western Australia.

The Western Australian Government is committed to driving gender equality and creating change to benefit our community.

Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality has been developed as a framework for Government, business, and the community to take action. With this Plan, we can all work together over the next 10 years to create a better, fairer and more equitable community in Western Australia.

Western Australians are speaking out about gender equality and the need for action. We are listening.

WA's Plan for Gender Equality



Vision

Women and girls in Western Australia live and work safely in a community where diversity is embraced and where access to rights, resources, opportunities and protections is not determined by gender.

Extensive consultation occurred across Western Australia with government agencies, private companies, community groups and individuals to develop our vision.

Principles

The plan to achieve this vision will be guided by the following principles:

- Everyone has the right to fully participate and succeed in the community.
- Achieving gender equality is everyone's responsibility.
- We will take a lifespan approach to achieving gender equality.
- Equality will be achieved through equitable practices and access.
- We will work together to achieve equality.
- Gender inequality impacts some women more than others.
- Action is based on knowledge, evidence from research and community voices.

This plan will help to change the conversation around gender equality. We need to plan together to bring about change.

Priorities	Goals
Health and wellbeing	Women are healthy, active and lead fulfilled lives
Safety and justice	Women live safely and have appropriate access to adequate legal protections
Economic independence	Women can be financially independent across all life stages
Leadership	Women's skills, achievements and strengths are valued, enabling them to participate equally in the community, including at leadership levels

See the Outcomes Framework on page 40 for more detail.

Future Western Australia

Consultation attendees and survey respondents were asked what gender equality will look like in future WA.

Men and women would have the opportunity to share family and income responsibilities equally (50/50) and both family and income roles would be equally valued.

Working arrangements would change as more men take on home duties roles - this is the only real way we will see change in the corporate sector - when it impacts men.

A more tolerant and diverse society with equal representation of gender in decision-making bodies, management and government resulting in a better and more accurate reflection of societal needs.

Women would feel safe and comfortable in all aspects of life, work and social situations. Women's voices would be valued and sought after.

Improved health, improved family relationships, stronger women, communities, workplaces.

– Survey respondents

Stronger Together sets out how the Government will lead the way to bring about generational change and move towards a future WA where these visions can become reality.

Making the vision reality



Government's role will include:

- developing a Workforce Diversification Strategy that will increase the representation of people from different backgrounds across the public sector and ensure they experience an inclusive work environment. The strategy has an action plan that will include an increase in women in leadership across the public sector.
- leading national efforts to pilot a project to test voluntary reporting of public sector data to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
- utilising the purchasing power of the Western Australian Government to incentivise suppliers to support and implement gender equality policy and practice.
- building relationships with the private sector to support innovative approaches to drive gender equality.
- monitoring the implementation of equity and diversity plans across public sector agencies.
- identifying best practice programs - including other jurisdictions - that demonstrate the commitment to gender equality principles.
- continuing initiatives to increase women's financial literacy and confidence to take control of their own financial future.
- working to expand and maximise effectiveness of the OnBoardWA program.
- committing to improving gender equality on panels to ensure greater gender diversity at forums and conferences.
- progressing reforms from the Final Report of the Ministerial Review of the State Industrial Relations System (Ritter Report), including a framework for the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission to deal with applications for equal remuneration orders.



Having strong and relevant policies in place which are monitored for their benefit.



Survey respondent

Achieving goals

A long-term approach

Stronger Together outlines an overall framework to achieve long-term change and will be accompanied by detailed action plans for implementation of specific initiatives over the next 10 years. The Plan will link actions to outcomes and will keep efforts focused on the long-term goals and vision. An initial outcomes framework has been developed and will be revised through the life of the Plan to enable flexibility.

Actions

An evidence-based approach is used for this Plan and best practice actions and initiatives in Western Australia and other jurisdictions will be considered. Feedback received from the community guides development of detailed action plans over the next 10 years. A consultation report will be available on the Department of Communities website.

Implementation

This Plan uses a whole of community approach to drive gender equality. The Western Australian Government is leading the way by developing strategies and initiatives that support gender equality within the public sector. Action plans will recognise Government's role working with all sectors in the community to develop initiatives under the four priority areas.

Monitoring

An evaluation framework will be developed as part of the first action plan and this will detail how actions will be evaluated over the life of Stronger Together. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure continuous improvement. Evaluation outcomes will inform the development of each new action plan and regular updates on progress will be available to the community.



Persistent, unwavering, cross-government commitment to addressing gender equality in every sphere - with a focus on underlying social norms that perpetuate inequality, but also recognizing need for equal women in leadership, need to prevent violence and address disadvantage.



Survey respondent

Relationship to other plans, policies and strategies

Stronger Together is aligned to frameworks and instruments at international, national and state levels. There is an obligation through a number of international frameworks to continue to advance gender equality and support women’s rights in Western Australia. The frameworks include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing Declaration – for more information see Appendix 1.

In Western Australia, the Plan intersects and overlaps with other strategies and plans developed by the State Government. The most significant of these are:

<p>Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity</p> <p>Western Australian Government</p>	<p>This whole-of-government targets program was launched by Premier Mark McGowan in 2019. It sets measurable targets to deliver better social, economic and environment outcomes for the State. Targets that align with Stronger Together include:</p> <p>A bright future – increasing participation in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) will address the underrepresentation of women and girl in STEM education and careers which disadvantages them financially and fails to use the entire talent pool to contribute to the economy.</p> <p>Aboriginal wellbeing – reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody will contribute to ending the cycle of family dislocation and disruption that is associated with intergenerational trauma</p> <p>A strong economy – increasing the number of employed persons in WA will support economic independence for women</p> <p>Regional prosperity – delivering stronger regional economies will support women in regional areas who are more likely than men to leave to find jobs in other areas and are less likely to have independent income if they stay.</p>
<p>WA’s Strategy for Reducing Family and Domestic Violence</p> <p>Department of Communities</p>	<p>This strategy will guide a whole of community approach to prevention and earlier intervention, victim safety and perpetrator accountability. Advancing gender equality is central to stopping violence against women. All strategies and initiatives that are developed under Stronger Together to advance gender equality in Western Australia align with the purpose of WA’s Strategy for Reducing Family and Domestic Violence.</p>
<p>Western Australian Women’s Health and Wellbeing Policy</p> <p>Department of Health</p>	<p>This policy was released in September 2019 and is designed to improve the health and wellbeing women and girls in Western Australia. The policy prioritises areas of action for health issues that particularly impact on women. One of the principles of the policy is that gender is a social determinant of health. Target areas include the impacts of gender-based violence, sexual health and mental health.</p>

<p>Workforce Diversification Strategy</p> <p>Public Sector Commission</p>	<p>This strategy has the twin goals of increasing the representation of people from different backgrounds at all levels across our sector and ensuring they experience an inclusive work environment. As well as a plan that focuses on women, there will be a plan for youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people of diverse sexualities and genders, and people with disability.</p>
<p>Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy</p> <p>Western Australian Government</p>	<p>In 2020, the WA Government is developing a strategy to guide how it works with Aboriginal people towards better social, economic, health and cultural outcomes.</p>

Other State Government policies that interconnect with Stronger Together include:

<p>Jobs WA</p>	<p>Western Australian Government</p>
<p>State Disability Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>State STEM Skills Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Jobs, Tourism, Skills and Innovation</p>
<p>Western Australian LGBTI Health Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Health</p>
<p>Western Australian Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse)</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>Western Australian Homelessness Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>Western Australian Housing Strategy 2020-2030</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>Action Plan for At Risk Youth</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>Western Australian Youth Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>Early Years Initiative</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>Veterans and Families Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>
<p>WA Carers Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>

Benefits of gender equality

Human rights

Australia made a commitment to ensuring that women have equal access to rights and opportunities when the Charter of the United Nations was adopted in 1945. Advancing gender equality will safeguard against women being treated unfairly in the way that laws, policies, regulations and rules are implemented in everyday life. Action to drive gender equality aims to ensure that women's and girls' human rights are understood and supported by everyone in the community.

Women's safety

Evidence shows that gender inequality, including beliefs, attitudes and behaviours relating to gender, set the social conditions that enable violence towards women. Perpetrators of family and domestic violence and sexual offences are overwhelmingly men.¹ Individuals who do not see men and women as equal, or who believe in very traditional gender roles, are more likely to tolerate, excuse or condone violence against women. Working to achieve gender equality is fundamental to breaking the cycle of violence against women.²

Economic benefit

There is clear evidence that gender equality in the workforce, and in leadership roles, brings benefits for the community. The Grattan Institute found that the Australian economy would increase by around \$25 billion if women's workforce participation increased by just six per cent.³ Research by McKinsey found that companies with several women on their boards financially outperform companies with no women, or few women.⁴ There is also evidence that companies with greater gender diversity in leadership roles are more likely to incorporate environmental and social targets into their operations and strategies.⁵

Gender equality also creates financial benefits for women and their families by increasing their participation in leadership roles and in many of the higher paid industries such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Men's wellbeing

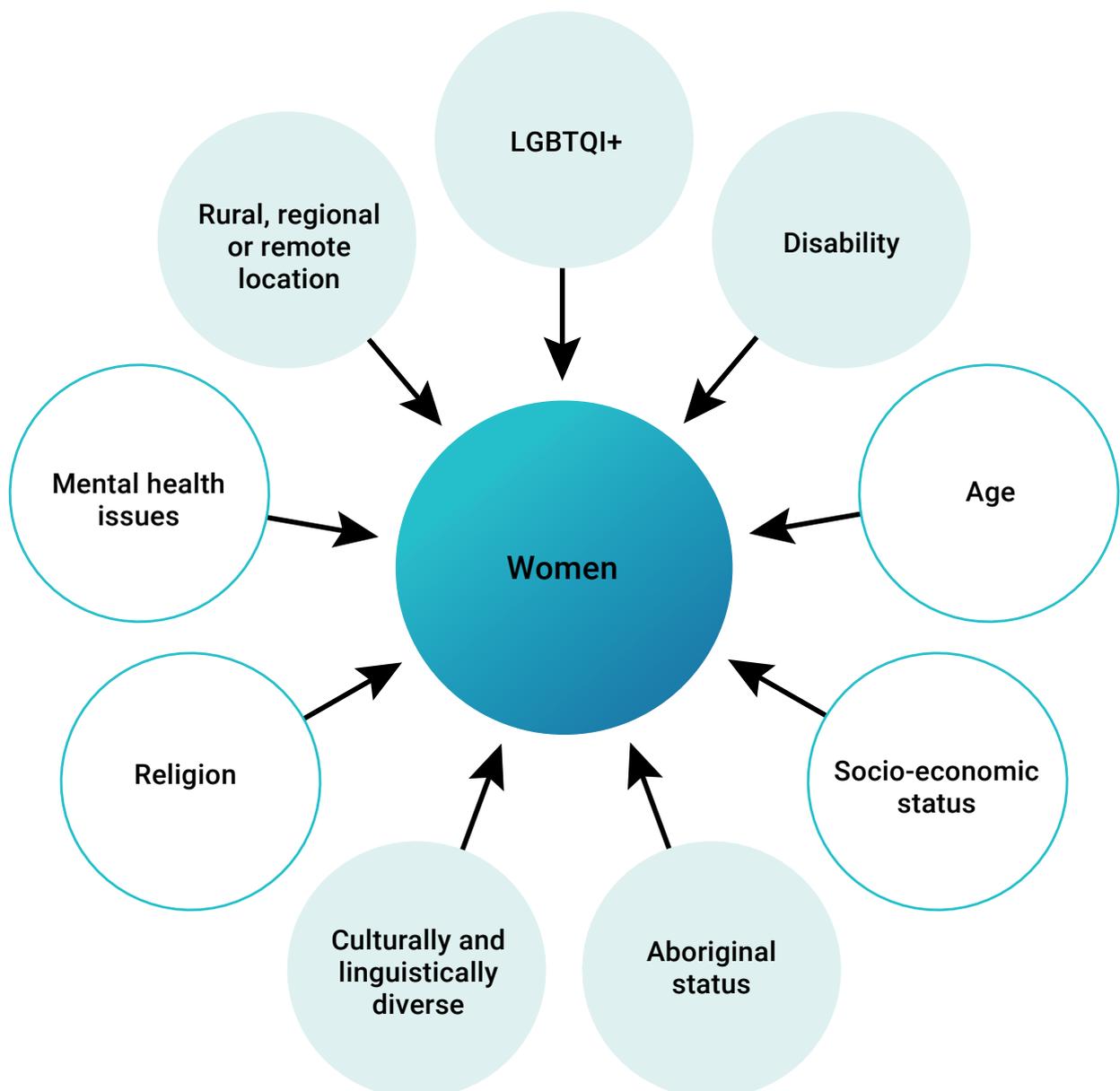
Traditional gender roles and stereotypes can also disadvantage men, who may feel pressure to fulfil unrealistic expectations associated with masculinity. Men can experience increased health risks and mental health issues from suppressing or denying emotions or from engaging in dangerous behaviours such as excessive alcohol consumption and risk-taking.

Gender equality empowers men to have a more active role in their children's lives and supports them to do so. Enabling men to achieve better balance between work and family responsibilities can improve their overall wellbeing and their emotional connections. More equality in parenting roles, care-giving responsibilities and domestic chores also creates more opportunities for women to engage in the workforce and progress their careers.

Gender inequality impacts some women more than others

The term intersectionality refers to the different characteristics of a person's identity that can intersect or overlap to affect their social experiences. Some women are affected by multiple types of bias or discrimination and face additional challenges or barriers to participation in their communities. Gender inequality is not experienced the same way by all women and it may be expressed differently within different contexts. Some of the overlapping identities and characteristics that impact on women's experiences include:

Gender inequality doesn't affect all women the same way. It's important to consider how gender intersects or overlaps with other aspects of a person's identity when developing actions for change.



Responding to gender inequality requires an understanding and recognition of intersectionalities and the dynamics of power and privilege that shape individual outcomes. Some of the intersectional issues and barriers experienced by women are highlighted below.

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds

Language barriers can prevent women from CaLD backgrounds from accessing education and employment opportunities, information about their rights, legal information and support services. Cultural and religious practices can define women's roles as wives and mothers and limit workforce participation and access to independent income.

Women with disability

Women with disability experience additional barriers to meaningful participation in their communities. Discrimination and prejudice can exclude them from being part of decision making on issues that affect their lives, such as their health care and reproductive health. Women with disability are in a high-risk group for sexual assault, abuse, exploitation and harassment. Women with disability experience bias in trying to gain employment and are more likely than either men with disability or other women to be in informal, low paid and vulnerable jobs.⁶

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex women (LGBTQI+)

A disproportionately high number of people who identify as LGBTQI+ experience poor mental health outcomes, including high risk of suicidal behaviours. Research tells us that these health outcomes are directly related to discrimination and abuse on the basis of sexual and gender identity.⁷ Harassment and hostility experienced by LGBTQI+ women can impact on their work, study and access to health services.

Women from rural, regional, and remote areas

The Australian Human Rights Commission reports that women in rural and regional areas are more likely to experience disadvantage and discrimination in the workplace than women in urban areas. They also encounter a lack of leadership roles and a high expectation that women will volunteer within their communities and perform unpaid work in family businesses. Women with children find it harder to be part of the workforce if they cannot access childcare or local schools in remote Western Australia.

Living in regional areas can mean that public transport options are limited. This can have additional impacts on women's caring responsibilities in the family, access to health services and risk of poorer health outcomes. Research indicates there is still considerable gender inequality in farming family inheritance, with only about 10 per cent of farms being passed onto daughters.⁸

Specific issues facing Aboriginal women

In Western Australia, 2.4 per cent of women identify as Aboriginal; of whom almost 32 per cent live in the north of the state and 38 per cent live in the Perth metropolitan area.

Historically, Aboriginal women in Western Australia had significant responsibilities in their communities for maintaining cultural rules and passing on knowledge and history to younger generations. Women's Business refers to the specific customs and practices that are performed by Aboriginal women, following strict rules and traditions. These relate to health and wellbeing matters, ceremonies and maintenance of traditional sites of significance. The impact of European settlement and the imposition of Western laws and policies have disrupted those traditional roles and contributed to ongoing intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal families and communities. In particular, the dislocation of many Aboriginal people from their lands has broken down cultural identity and prevented the traditional teaching of knowledge and social values.



Women are the backbone of our families and we know what we want



Participant at the Gnylmarung Women's Camp consultation

Aboriginal women in Western Australia experience gender inequality within the context of the ongoing impacts of European settlement on their communities. Families still experience grief, loss and trauma as members of the stolen generation deal with cultural disconnection and loss of identity. Aboriginal women may not identify family violence as a gender issue, but rather as a consequence of European settlement.

Our Watch reports that Aboriginal women in Australia experience much higher risk than non-Aboriginal women of physical or sexual violence and are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence.⁹ While family violence is generally underreported, Aboriginal women have even lower reporting rates than non-Aboriginal women. This may be due to cultural factors such as shame and stigma, reluctance to approach authority figures and past experiences of culturally inappropriate responses.

Aboriginal women are more likely than non-Aboriginal women to talk of lateral violence being perpetrated by members of their community against each other. This is understood as the expression of living with anger and fear as the result of generations of cultural oppression and being forced to live in a way that is at odds with traditional culture.

It is important that responses to the issues experienced by Aboriginal women are culturally specific and are developed in partnership with women. Engaging with Aboriginal communities and empowering women by recognising their strengths and authority are central to bringing about positive change. Landmark work by Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO in 2018 set out principles for engaging with Aboriginal women and girls. These include self-determination, participation in decision-making, respect for and protection of culture, and equality and non-discrimination.

Gender inequality across the lifespan

Gender inequality affects women across the lifespan, from childhood to older age. It is important to understand how attitudes and expectations develop and the significant ways that many small actions and behaviours can build up to negatively impact women's lives.

Children (ages 0 – 12)



Children's identity begins to develop in utero and from birth as they are impacted by the behaviours of those around them. Observing traditional gender roles influences children's activities and behaviours,¹⁰ which is further reinforced by encouragement to play with particular toys, wear certain clothes or like specific colours. Studies have shown that boys and girls are guided to engage in different types of play activities.¹¹ Phrases such as, "boys don't cry", or "you throw like a girl", can affect children's ideas about gender differences and their expectations, actions and choices. These gendered learnings are reinforced over time, often unintentionally, through popular culture, the media, sales marketing and by family and peers.¹² The early years set the foundations for lifelong attitudes about gender roles.



Adolescence (ages 12–18)



Young women and girls report that sexual harassment and public objectification begins from a young age – often before the age of 15.¹³ In adolescence, young women's appearance is subject to a high level of scrutiny, and they are at much higher risk of developing eating disorders and body image issues than young men. Young women are also more likely than young men to experience sexual assault and sexual violence, which can include everything from drink-spiking and non-consensual sexting, through to date rape and family violence. Social media plays a significant role in reinforcing the gendered expectations that have already become entrenched for many adolescents.

Gender stereotypes and behaviours learned in childhood influence decisions made by adolescents, including school subject choices. Social expectations and attitudes, rather than ability, continue to steer fewer girls than boys into science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects in school.¹⁴ Although girls are more likely than boys to finish high school,¹⁵ they are less likely to choose career pathways in the relatively well paid STEM fields.





Adulthood (ages 18–60)

More women than men complete tertiary education yet the average graduating salary is 3.6 per cent higher for men.¹⁶ This pay gap extends throughout the lifespan with Western Australian women's full-time earnings, on average, being 22 per cent less than men's.



Women are most likely to be the primary carer within traditional family structures, impacting on their workforce participation, income level and leadership progression. Even when working full-time, women undertake more hours of unpaid domestic duties than men.

Women's risk of family and domestic violence is significantly higher than men's and more than a third of women in Western Australia who experienced violence from a partner reported that this occurred during pregnancy.¹⁷ Women also face a much higher risk of sexual assault or abuse than men, and for Aboriginal women,¹⁸ or women with disability, that risk is further increased.¹⁹



Maturity (ages 60+)

The inequality experienced throughout their lives, culminates with older Australian women retiring, on average, with superannuation balances that are half the amount of men's. This increases women's risk of experiencing poverty and homelessness in older age, and impacts on their ability to access health services and make lifestyle choices. Women can expect to live longer than men, which means their superannuation has to stretch further.



Older women are at a higher risk of elder abuse than men, with research showing an emerging pattern that can include the continuation of intimate partner abuse experienced during earlier years, as well as abuse by family members.²⁰

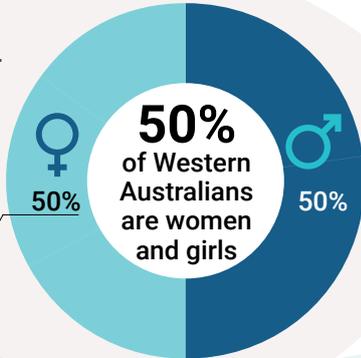
Snapshot of Western Australian women

For further data relating to women in Western Australia please see the Women's Report Card 2019 on the Department of Communities website www.communities.wa.gov.au.²¹

Population in 2018

ABS, 2018

1,301,364



Life expectancy

Women **85 years**

Men **80 years**

Aboriginal women **58 years**

ABS, 2016



2.4%

of Western Australian women identified as Aboriginal

ABS, 2016



4.9%

of women in Western Australia have profound or severe disability

ABS, 2016



51%

of positions on WA Government controlled boards and committees are held by women.¹

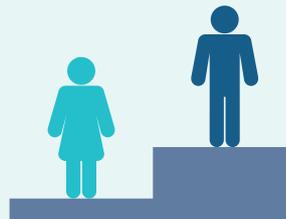
Dept of the Premier and Cabinet, 2019



56%

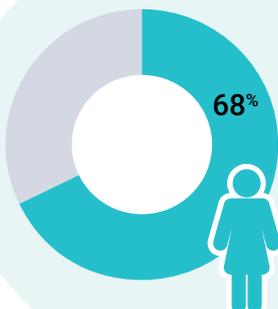
of university graduates are women

ABS Gender Indicators, 2018



The gender pay gap in Western Australia is **21.78%**, which is the worst in Australia. The national average is 13.99 per cent

ABS, 2019



68% of adults accessing homelessness services in Western Australia are women

AIHW 2019



46%

of women in full-time custody in Western Australia are Aboriginal

ABS, 2016

¹This excludes Development Assessment Panels, which include Local Government council members.



Priority area: Health and wellbeing



Goal: Women are healthy, active and lead fulfilled lives

Women experience specific health factors that can affect their opportunities, social engagement and general wellbeing. Many of these factors relate to biological sex, such as sexual, reproductive and maternal health as well as some cancers like cervical or ovarian cancer. Other factors are social determinants which impact on women to a greater extent than men. These include family and domestic violence, sexual violence and family caring responsibilities which can make it difficult to access health care due to lack of time and financial resources.

Strategies and initiatives that aim to improve women's health must consider both biological and social factors, as well as addressing the needs of specific groups of women who are particularly vulnerable. They must also respond to the changing health and wellbeing needs of women at different life stages.

Changes to rates of life expectancy and risk factors provide an indication of the overall health of a population. The life expectancy for non-Aboriginal women in Western Australia is 84.8 years, which has increased from 81.1 years since 1998. Aboriginal women on average experience poorer health outcomes than other women in Western Australia. Life expectancy for Aboriginal women is 58.2 years, a small increase from 57 years in 1998.

Women in Western Australia have reduced many of the risky lifestyle behaviours that can contribute to poorer health outcomes, such as smoking and excessive consumption of alcohol, and are engaging in more exercise. However, rates of obesity have increased significantly and around one-third of women in Western Australia are now classified as being obese, which increases risk of injury and overall poorer health outcomes.

Women experience relatively high levels of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and eating disorders. These can be linked to biological health



Barriers to accessing health and well-being services impacts negatively on women, particularly in rural and regional areas.



Survey respondent



factors, lifestyle behaviours and to social determinants such as gender based violence. Some groups of women are more at risk of experiencing mental health related issues, including women experiencing homelessness, women from CaLD backgrounds and LGBTQI+ women. Aboriginal people typically define their experiences within a social and emotional context which includes connection to body, mind and emotions, family and kinship, community, culture, language, country, spirit, spirituality and ancestors.

Regular physical activity is important to maintain both physical and mental health. It can enable connection to the community and it can positively impact on women's and girls' self-esteem. However, 82 per cent of women in WA do not do the recommended amount of physical activity.²² Gendered differences in rates of participation in organised sports are evident from an early age and research indicates that half of all teenage girls in Australia quit sport by the age of 17.²³ Limitations in the range of sports available for women and girls, as well as unequal media coverage of women's sport and physical activities, has impacted on participation rates and reinforces other social norms about gender roles. Women's opportunities to participate in physical activity can also be negatively affected by competing demands from their multiple roles in the workforce and the family. The increased focus on elite women's sport in recent years is starting to have a positive impact on rates of participation among young women and girls, and creating a change in community attitude towards women's sport.

Participation in arts and culture can have significant benefits for women's wellbeing and overall health as well as enriching their community participation and identity. Aboriginal women artists make a strong contribution to the arts sector in WA and recognise the valuable role that arts and culture play within their own communities.

What we heard from consultations

- Access to health services, particularly specialists, can be more difficult for women in rural and regional areas, especially for Aboriginal women.
- Many LGBTQI+ women experience discrimination and judgemental attitudes that negatively impact on their interactions with health, housing and community services.
- Health literacy is a critical issue for women, particularly those from marginalised groups including women from CaLD backgrounds.
- There is a need for education and focus on accessing preventative measures, including awareness raising of existing services for women.
- More doctors specialising in women's health.
- More research is needed into women-specific health issues and gender specific consequences of disease and treatment.
- Gender inequality in the workplace and the home are linked to poorer health and mental health outcomes.
- Services and practitioners with better family and domestic violence training, including culturally specific training, would offer better protections for women.



Issues in health and wellbeing need to be addressed for women especially mental health stigma and discrimination need to be addressed as well as cultural issues related to women's health particularly in Indigenous communities."



Survey respondent



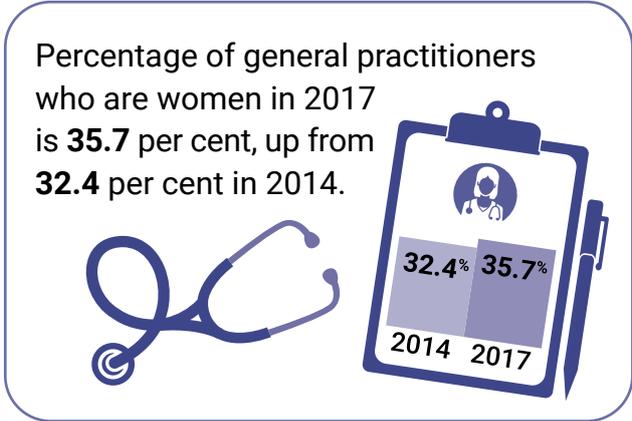
- There is a need for locally based women’s groups to provide social support, wellness initiatives and activities as preventative measures - there are men’s sheds and seniors’ clubs but nothing comparable that’s specifically for women.

Desired outcomes

- Women are healthy and have a positive sense of wellbeing.
- Women have access to health (including maternal, sexual and reproductive health) and mental health services which reflect their needs according to their life stage, race, social, cultural, psychological and economic circumstances.
- The gap in life expectancy and health outcomes between Aboriginal and

non-Aboriginal women is closed.

- Women lead healthy lifestyles and their exposure to injury, illnesses and diseases is minimised.
- Aboriginal and CaLD women increase their participation in screening for breast and other cancers.



Women’s sport



In 2018, the Minister for Sport and Recreation initiated a policy to quarantine at least \$500,000 of Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) funding annually specifically for the upgrade of existing sporting facilities to better encourage participation from women and girls. This recognises that grassroots clubs are a vital pathway for women and girls to engage in sports and develop skills to higher levels.

In 2019-20 the Government allocated more than \$3 million towards nine projects that directly upgrade sporting facilities to make them suitable for women and girls. This included:

- Windelya Sports Association - \$400,000 towards the construction of four unisex changerooms and amenities for Melville City Hockey Club;
- City of Wanneroo – \$250,000 towards the construction of six unisex changerooms at Wanneroo City Soccer Club; and
- City of Swan - \$350,000 towards the construction of four unisex changerooms at Lilac Hill.

Women in leadership targets have been developed for all State Sporting Associations and Industry Representative Organisations. Organisations that do not achieve the target of 50 per cent women board directors in a three year time frame will be subject to funding implications.

Multicultural women’s uniform guidelines have been developed to enable women from CaLD backgrounds to participate more easily in sport.



What the Western Australian Government is currently doing



Western Australian Women's Health and Wellbeing Policy: Lifting the health profile of women and girls was launched in September 2019. The policy provides a strategic, coordinated, and gender-responsive approach by the Western Australian health system and its partners. The policy coordinates equitable, accessible and appropriate services that optimise the health, safety and wellbeing of women and girls in Western Australia.



A new \$1.8 million **Family Birthing Centre** opened at Fiona Stanley Hospital in July 2019. The centre features three birthing suites, specially designed equipment and birthing pools. Research has shown that birthing surroundings can positively impact birth outcomes. Perth women living south of the river will now have another choice for a more home-like, holistic birthing experience.



Girls Rock music camp is funded by the WA Government and delivered through West Australian Music (WAM) to support and mentor aspiring young women musicians to empower them and build capacity in the male-dominated music industry.



Boodjari Yorgas Midwifery Group Practice enables women in Perth's southern suburbs to receive culturally safe care throughout their pregnancy.

What we can do together

- Improve women's awareness of existing services that support women's health and wellbeing.
- Create supportive and safe environments to encourage healthy behaviours among women in place-based settings, including facilitating social inclusion activities.

- Build awareness and understanding of gender-based violence and the associated health impacts.
- Increase awareness of reproductive health services, particularly for women in rural, regional and remote locations, and minimise stigma in relation to sexual health.
- Promote and encourage women's and girls' participation in sport and physical activity.
- Challenge stigma associated with mental health issues.
- Develop and promote cultural and historical understanding of specific issues affecting Aboriginal women's health and wellbeing and the generally poorer health outcomes faced by Aboriginal women.

Key facts

One in three women in Western Australia were categorised as obese in 2017, compared with one in five in 2002.

The fertility rate for women in Western Australia declined from 2.1 in 2008 to 1.87 in 2016.

Western Australian women giving birth by caesarean section increased from 15.6 per cent in 1986 to 34.8 per cent in 2014.

Western Australian women's rate of hospitalisation for dialysis increased by 22.6 per cent between 2002 and 2017, with 48.2 per cent of the 2017 hospitalisation being Aboriginal women.

22.1 per cent of women in Western Australia had a mental health diagnosis of depression, anxiety or stress related problems, in 2017.

Source: Women's Report Card 2019. ²⁴



Priority area: Safety and justice



Goal: Women live safely and have appropriate access to adequate legal protections

Women in Western Australia are far more likely than men to experience physical or sexual violence during their lives. Women who do experience violence are at increased risk of poor health and mental health outcomes in addition to the impact on their work, relationships and family. One in five women in Western Australia report having experienced partner violence since the age of 15, and more than one-third of those women reported that the violence occurred during pregnancy. The rate of family and domestic violence in Western Australia is higher than the national average. Social, emotional, religious, financial and technological abuse are all forms of family and domestic violence.



I was shocked recently to gain insight into my daily fear levels as a woman and all the things I don't do in case I get hurt by a man e.g. walking on my own, camping on my own, travelling on my own, being cautious when walking to my car etc.



Survey respondent

Women express high levels of concern about becoming victims of assault and violence in public places, on public transport and in their homes, which impacts on their activities and movements in the community. Women's fear of violence is the result of the real risk of violence they face, yet women are frequently encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety by modifying their behaviour. There is a strong relationship between achieving gender equality and ending violence against women. It starts with promoting respect and all Western Australians have a role to play.

Offender and imprisonment rates in Western Australia are significantly lower for women than men but are high compared with other Australian states and territories. Aboriginal women are overrepresented in imprisonment rates in Western Australia.



What we heard from consultations

- Women's participation in their communities and especially in social activities is negatively impacted by the risk, and perceived risk, of violence and sexual assault.
- The drivers of family and domestic violence in Aboriginal families are complex and must be treated within a socio-cultural context.
- There is a strong correlation between women's risk of violence or assault and attitudes towards women – education from a young age is needed to bring about cultural change. Sexual harassment is still very common in everyday situations and particularly in the workplace, online and at pubs and clubs – trivialised by a 'boys will be boys' attitude.
- The onus should not be on women to keep themselves safe.
- More appropriate justice responses are needed that are consistent with the harm caused by violence towards women. This would also act as an incentive for victims to report without stigma or blame.
- Housing security in relation to poverty, financial insecurity and relationship breakdown is an issue for women of all ages.
- Planning of buildings and spaces should consider safety aspects, including CCTV and adequate lighting. Regional areas often don't consider safety issues.
- Factors such as disability can increase women's increased risk of assault and abuse.

Desired outcomes

- Women are safe and free from violence, discrimination and harassment in their homes, at work and in the community.
- Perpetrators change their behaviour and are held accountable for their actions.
- Western Australian Aboriginal women's imprisonment and involvement in the criminal justice system are reduced.

Key facts

One in five Western Australian women reported experiencing partner violence since the age of 15.

Western Australian Police data shows that in 2017–18 there were almost 3,400 breaches of family violence restraining orders issued in relation to victims who are women and girls

In 2017–18, 700 women in Western Australia reported being victims of recent sexual assault, compared with 44 men.

In 2016, 27.7 per cent of Western Australian women and girls did not walk alone after dark because they felt unsafe, compared with only 3.8 per cent of men.

Physical violence was experienced by 3.3 per cent of Western Australian women in 2016, compared with 2.2 per cent of men.

Source: Women's Report Card 2019.²⁵

What the Western Australian Government is currently doing

The State Government is developing WA's Strategy for Reducing Family and Domestic Violence that aligns with Stronger Together and will guide a whole-of-community approach to prevention and earlier intervention, victim safety and perpetrator accountability.

The strategy includes a focus on access and inclusion as well as considering the needs of Aboriginal people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people, and people in regional and remote Western Australia.

-  Specific programs and initiatives that are being developed to address family and domestic violence include:
- a **Respectful Relationships Teaching Support Program** in Western Australian schools.
 - two one-stop hubs co-designed with the community to bring together services and support for people experiencing family and domestic violence.
 - an additional **Communicare Breathing Space** therapeutic program for men who have been violent in the family environment and wish to change their lives.
 - two additional women's refuges.
 - culturally appropriate support to people from Aboriginal and CaLD backgrounds who are experiencing family and domestic violence.
 - implementation of the national **Family Violence Restraining Orders** scheme.
 - ten days family and domestic violence leave for public sector employees in Western Australia.

 **Safer Venues WA** has been funded to work with the entertainment and music industry to raise awareness and improve inclusivity and safety.

 The Government has committed to a 23 per cent reduction in the number of Aboriginal adults in prison in Western Australia by 2028–29.

 The Western Australian Government is working with other Australian jurisdictions to form a nationally consistent approach to vehicle registration laws and offensive advertising. This action results from ongoing complaints and concerns about inappropriate and offensive messages on vehicles for hire. Legislation in Queensland and Tasmania addresses such complaints but does not allow for action to be taken if a vehicle is registered in a different jurisdiction. The Western Australian Government is committed to pursuing a national approach for reform.

 **All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness** is a whole of community plan, setting the direction for all levels of government, business and the community sector in responding to and preventing homelessness in WA.



What we can do together

- Ensure that people who experience family and domestic violence are supported through workplace policies and initiatives that recognise their particular needs, such as additional leave.
- Develop policies and strategies that reinforce the right to work in an environment that is free from sexual harassment and abuse.
- Reinforce language and attitudes that challenge all violence towards women and girls.
- Be an active bystander – speak up if you witness harassment, abuse or stereotyping and support other people who speak up.

“
 Women must feel secure at home and in the workplace to enable them to reach their full potential.
 ”

Survey respondent



Safer Venues WA



The State Government provided funding to community sector organisation Safer Venues WA to work with entertainment venues to make them safer for audiences, artists and staff.

Research by Safer Venues WA found that harassment, intimidation, discrimination and assault are widespread at Western Australian entertainment venues and disproportionately affect women. Nearly half of people experiencing such incidents had left a venue as a result and 19 per cent considered personal safety as a barrier to attending entertainment venues. Ten per cent of respondents had experienced non-consensual touching and 1.5 per cent had experienced violence.

The funding will support Safer Venues WA to work with audiences, artists and the music industry to improve inclusivity and personal safety, develop resources to create awareness and provide valuable training and educational tools.



Priority area: Economic independence



Goal: Women can be financially independent across all life stages

The gender pay gap in Western Australia is the highest of all states and territories in Australia and has been for many years. There can be confusion about what is meant by gender pay gap, which is calculated from average full time weekly earnings of men and women.



Many women stay at home with young children for several years and miss out on topping up superannuation during this time.

Survey respondent



The pay gap is caused by a number of factors, such as the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles as well as the undervaluing of occupations in which women have traditionally been overrepresented, such as child care. Research has also found that gender bias in recruitment and promotion practices contributes significantly to the gender pay gap.²⁶

Women's higher rates of contribution to unpaid care and unpaid domestic duties make it more difficult for them to engage in paid work. Women are more likely than men to be single parents – almost 82 per cent of single parent families are headed by women. Extended family support is less likely to be available for women in

Western Australia than in other states,²⁷ due in part to the high numbers of people moving to the state to work resulting in the lack of family networks. In couple families, women are far more likely than men to take parental leave to care for young children and are also more likely to provide care for elderly family members. Even when women work full-time, they spend more time in unpaid domestic duties than men who work full-time.

The stereotypical gender roles that are learned from childhood and reinforced across the lifespan influence women's career choices and participation in fields that generally attract higher wages, such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Even when they pursue STEM careers, women experience obstacles and biases, including harassment, lack of flexible work arrangements and lack of mentors, which act as disincentives to remain in STEM.



Over their lives then, women continue to face barriers to participating and progressing in the workforce which results in lower lifetime earnings than men and increased risk of reaching retirement without financial independence.

Alcoa



Alcoa's Australian employees, regardless of gender, are offered 16 weeks paid parental leave if they are the primary carer of a new baby, and the generous offering has seen 100 per cent retention of employees returning to work after taking leave. This financial benefit is available along with the Australian government-funded parental leave primary carers can access.

The company also provides two weeks paid parental leave to secondary carers and during both forms of leave employee superannuation payments are continued.

All Alcoa employees, including casuals, have access to paid parental leave when starting with the company (calculated on a pro rata basis) with no eligibility period to wait to receive the benefit.

This year, to broaden the parental leave policy and entitlements available to employees, Alcoa extended the definition of parental leave to include employees who choose alternative pathways to parenthood such as adoption, surrogacy and fostering. Special leave and support is also offered to parents of stillborn babies or those who experience infant death.

The company is proud of its return to work success rate which it also attributes to the various support initiatives in place, including a Parents and Kids program, paediatric first-aid training and a flexible return to work program.

Alcoa has been named an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality by the Federal Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency for 17 consecutive years.



What we heard from consultations

- Women are very concerned about poverty in older age due to low levels of superannuation resulting largely from career breaks to be primary carers.
- Traditional gender roles in families leads to lower financial literacy for women when men are responsible for household finances. This disadvantages women if relationships breakdown.
- The gender pay gap impacts on women's ability to leave family and domestic violence situations by impeding their financial independence.
- Access to education and training to upskill or transition to new roles would increase women's financial independence.
- Pay inequity and undervaluing of caring occupations in which the workforce is predominantly women has a significant impact on women's income across their lives.
- Affordable, accessible and flexible child care and after school care supports women's workforce participation and career progression.
- Conscious and unconscious bias are still very evident in recruitment, career progression, workplace culture and expectations (long working hours).
- Discrimination and harassment against women in the LGBTQI+ community can adversely affect their workforce participation, career progression and job security.

Desired outcomes

- Women attain financial independence, including in retirement.
- Women and girls participate in a broad range of education and

training fields, including in disciplines traditionally dominated by men such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

- Women have access to secure and affordable housing.
- Women receive the same pay as men for doing the same work or work of comparable value.
- Participation of women in the workforce is supported and expanded.
- Women and men are supported to share caring responsibilities.

Key facts

The school retention rate for 2017 in Western Australia was 87.5 per cent for non-Aboriginal girls and 53 per cent for Aboriginal girls, which is a significant improvement from 43 per cent in 2010.

In 2016, the labour force participation rate in Western Australia was 74.1 per cent for non-Aboriginal men and 62.7 per cent for non-Aboriginal women. For Aboriginal men the rate was 53.6 per cent and for Aboriginal women the rate was 45.1 per cent.

On average, half of all employed women in Western Australia work full-time, compared with almost four out of five men.

Underemployment refers to people who are employed but would like to work longer hours. In 2018, 12.9 per cent of Western Australian women were underemployed.

In 2015–16, 22 per cent of women in Western Australia aged 55–65 had no superannuation at all.

Source: Women's Report Card 2019.²⁸



What the Western Australian Government is currently doing



The Government's **Our Priorities** framework sets out measurable targets to ensure that all of Western Australia can share in the State's prosperity. This includes a commitment to increase participation in STEM.

Future Jobs, Future Skills: Driving STEM skills in Western Australia is the State's first ever STEM skills strategy and will contribute to addressing the Government's Our Priorities target of 85 per cent of Year 12 students completing two or more STEM courses by 2024. A key objective of the strategy is to address the lack of gender diversity in STEM education and careers.



The Government provides **free financial counselling services** for Western Australians who are facing financial hardship. The program supports people who are struggling with bills to gain control of their finances. Financial counsellors are specially trained to support people experiencing family and domestic violence.

The Economic Empowerment project is supported by the State Government to provide financial literacy training for women who have experienced family and domestic violence. The program is a train-the-trainer model, with professional development being delivered to staff in family and domestic violence services to support service users. Resources, tools and a curriculum are also being developed through the program.



Aligned to the Economic Empowerment project is the **Your Toolkit** online resource which was developed by Financial Toolbox with Government funding. The toolkit helps to build financial knowledge and skills for women in Western Australia to support their economic independence. The resource was developed for women who have faced financial abuse and/or family and domestic violence. The toolkit includes guides to help women identify financial abuse and take steps towards gaining control of their finances.



Western Australia has long been the only state where defacto couples who separate do not have to share their superannuation. This has resulted in disadvantage for many people, most often women, who are likely to have less superannuation than men. When married couples separate, their superannuation is treated like any other asset during property settlements. Following pressure from the WA Government, the Family Law Amendment (Western Australia De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Bill was introduced into Federal Parliament in late 2019.



What we can do together

- Build on partnerships between government and the corporate sector to improve women's participation in employment pathways that have traditionally been male-dominated.
- Organisations to assess and address gender pay inequity.
- Develop programs and initiatives that support women's financial literacy, particularly women who are vulnerable or at risk of poverty and homelessness.
- Promote broad dialogue to encourage a more equal division of labour in the home to enable women's workforce participation.
- Develop strategies to highlight STEM and trade career pathways for women and girls.

Rio Tinto



The safety and wellbeing of their people is Rio Tinto's top priority. In 2017, the company took steps to eradicate domestic violence with a package of initiatives to protect and support employees. In 2018, in Australia, this led to Rio Tinto being the first mining company to receive White Ribbon accreditation and recognition at the annual Australian Women in Resources National Awards. The programme has now been extended to Canada and the US, where employees in need can take up to ten days of paid extra leave, work flexible hours, and receive financial

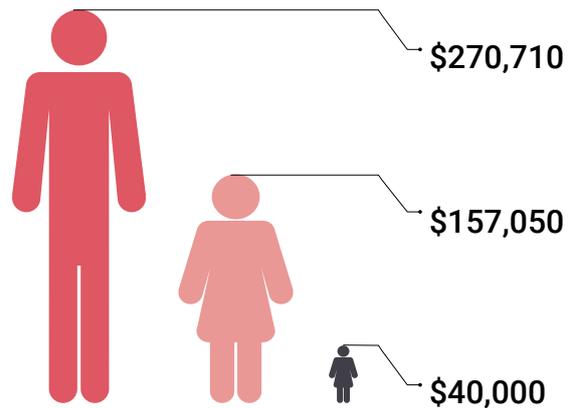
aid and emergency accommodation. Rio Tinto has been delivering general awareness training equipping leaders and HR teams to address family and domestic violence issues, while rolling out similar programmes in other parts of the world.

Rio Tinto's commitment to promoting healthy, respectful relationships in the communities where it operates has recently been strengthened by rolling out the 'Allison's Gift' domestic violence awareness training that has been developed in collaboration with the Allison Baden-Clay Foundation and Griffith University, and MATE (Motivating Action Through Empowerment) bystander training. This training has been piloted in 2019 and will continue to be rolled out through their Australian businesses in 2020. The training teaches participants on being active bystanders, how to identify warning signs and how to intervene safely in domestic violence situations.



Superannuation balances

Average superannuation balances at the time of retirement in 2015-16 were \$270,710 for men and \$157,050 for women. Around 50 per cent of women in the 60-64 years age group had super balances of nil or less than \$40,000.



Aboriginal Ranger Program



The State Government launched its landmark Aboriginal Ranger Program in 2018 to provide new jobs and training opportunities. The \$20 million program is helping Aboriginal organisations employ and train rangers to undertake land and

sea management including conservation, cultural, tourism and education activities across the State.

The first round of funding employed 189 Aboriginal people, 55 per cent of whom were women, in a wide range of projects. Another 47 Aboriginal women (around 50 per cent of overall employment) are expected to be employed in the second round.

The employment brings social, cultural and economic benefits for rangers and contributes to improved community wellbeing. It also builds leadership skills and enables partnerships with private sector organisations.



Priority area: Leadership



Goal: Women's skills, achievements and strengths are valued, enabling them to participate equally in the community, including at leadership levels.

There is significant evidence that increasing the number of women in leadership roles provides a number of significant benefits.



Not overlooking a woman for promotion because she recently took time off to have a child. Children are everyone's future, it shouldn't only affect a women's career. That's unfair.



Survey respondent

Firstly, it benefits individual women who are rewarded for their experience and skills and enabled to contribute to high-level decision making. In addition, women's leadership contributes to their communities as they become positive role models for other women and can mentor or sponsor women to develop their own careers. Women champion cultural change in their organisations to better support women and ensure more flexible and equitable workplaces that enable women at all stages of their careers. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, there is compelling research that shows there are economic benefits for organisations that have more gender balance in leadership. Women bring a diversity of views and opinions to leadership roles and foster stronger connections with stakeholders and clients. Companies with more women on their boards financially outperform

companies that have no or few women.²⁹ Evidence shows that diversity in leadership can also safeguard business profits during times of recession or market volatility.³⁰

Women in Western Australia face significant barriers and challenges in progressing to leadership positions. Traditional gender roles in families can mean that women in leadership still find themselves juggling family responsibilities more so than their male colleagues. Conscious and unconscious bias within organisations can see women being overlooked for promotion opportunities, even if they have relevant qualifications and experience. The Committee for Perth's Filling the Pool report found that the corporate culture in Perth is highly masculine and the valuable business networks that can enhance

men's careers may be inaccessible for women. Findings from the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey indicate that 14 per cent of people believe that men make better political leaders than women.

The community sector affords women more opportunities for leadership, although the financial benefits are almost always lower than the private or public sectors.



67 per cent of CEOs of not-for-profit organisations are women.



However, **80 per cent** of CEOs in organisations that have a turnover less than \$1m are women,



but only **50 per cent** in organisations that have a turnover more than \$2.5 million are women.

What we heard from consultations

- Leadership should not be defined by the traditional male model – women may have a different leadership style which can be more effective; collaborative instead of competitive.
- Access to leadership enables women to have influence and power – this includes the power to advocate for other women and to be positive role models and is particularly important in male-dominated industries and sport settings.
- Quotas and positive discrimination may be a necessary step to address unconscious bias and change norms and attitudes. The 'merit' argument is not equally applied and often relies on criteria which can inadvertently discriminate against women, such as years of continuous service.
- Women from marginalised groups can face additional barriers to accessing leadership positions and is particularly important in male-dominated industries and sport settings.

- Women in leadership are more likely than men to be juggling family care responsibilities which disadvantages them and is a disincentive for other women to pursue leadership roles. Male leaders are more likely to have someone else who is the primary carer for their children.

Desired outcomes

- Western Australian women participate fully at leadership levels within community, business and government organisations, including boards and committees.
- Western Australian women participate fully in appointed and elected offices.



More women leaders will filter down to more women being promoted.



Survey respondent



What the Western Australian Government is currently doing



In 2017, the Government committed to 50 per cent representation of women on Government boards and committees and achieved this by mid 2019. **OnBoardWA** was launched in 2017 and enables people to register their interest in joining a board or committee. A new website was developed and includes an online register which boards and committees can consult when seeking new members. Women are particularly encouraged to register with OnBoardWA and to keep their details updated.



The **WA Women's Hall of Fame** has been supported by funding from Lotterywest and the Department of Communities since its inaugural year in 2011. Its purpose is to acknowledge the contributions of women to Western Australia's community, culture and history. Women who are role models in business, education, culture, arts, sport, STEM, health and community are recognised for their achievements. The Women's Hall of Fame is now incorporated and is developing strategies to move towards a self-sustaining model over time.



Senior women's leadership in the Western Australian public sector has increased significantly in the last two years, with seven women now holding Director General positions. The Government has also appointed women to many of the most senior positions in judicial authorities in Western Australia, resulting in four of the seven positions now being held by women.



The Public Sector Commission is developing a whole-of-sector Workforce Diversification Strategy for Western Australia. The strategy will incorporate agency progress on key diversity data. Women in leadership will be one of the focus areas of the diversification strategy.

Key facts

The percentage of women in Senior Executive Service positions in the WA public sector has increased from 22.5 per cent in 2007 to 36 per cent in early 2019.

Almost 30 per cent of elected local government mayors or presidents are women, a rise from 24 per cent in 2005.

The proportion of women on government boards and committees in WA has risen from 41 per cent in 2013 to 50 per cent by mid 2019.

The proportion of women delegates on the council of UnionsWA has increased from 25.4 per cent in 2003 to 40.1 per cent in 2018.

Source: Women's Report Card 2019.³¹



The 'boys clubs' still exist at management level in most businesses. Women often take extended periods from work to have children and this sets them back career-wise.



Survey respondent



What we can do together

- Encourage business initiatives that increase women's participation in traditionally male-dominated industries, for example the Pink Ship Program introduced by Austal shipbuilders in 2019 and the Women in Engineering Program delivered by Chevron through the South Metropolitan TAFE.
- Celebrate organisations that are doing the right thing and taking steps to enable women to enter and remain in the workforce and progress to leadership roles if they wish.
- Consider mentoring, sponsoring and supporting women into leadership roles if you are in a position to do so.
- Recognise your influence – men can decline opportunities that represent bias or inequality such as speaking on all-male panels at events or conferences.

King Wood Mallesons – equitable briefing



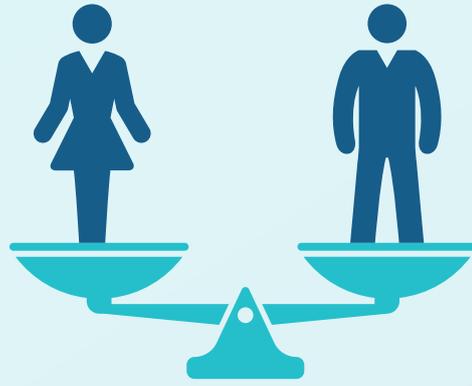
In 2016 the Law Council of Australia launched a new national model Equitable Briefing Policy aimed at driving cultural change within the legal profession, supporting the progression and retention of female barristers and addressing the significant pay gap and underrepresentation of women in the superior courts. King Wood Mallesons (KWM) was one of the first group of law firms to commit to the policy which encourages anyone responsible for counsel briefing to make all reasonable endeavours to brief women barristers with relevant seniority and experience.

To assist in the identification and recommending of women barristers, KWM has developed a National Female Barrister Directory which provides a listing of some women junior and senior barristers across Victoria, NSW, Queensland, WA and ACT. This directory is not exhaustive and does not include all women junior and senior barristers across Australia, but is a guide or tool that may be used when considering recommending or retaining women barristers. KWM also holds regular events to bring together counsel and clients to create connections and share information to collectively further equitable briefing.

KWM measures their equitable briefing progress bi-annually and since the introduction of the new targets it has seen upward movement in relation to junior women counsel briefings with some upward movements also in relation to senior counsel across jurisdictions.

10 tips for driving workplace gender equality

Addressing gender equality within organisations will not happen without dedicated effort. Like any business issue, a strategic and systematic approach is required.



1 Take a strategic approach to addressing gender equality

Conduct a thorough diagnosis of the status of gender equality in your organisation. This will help inform your strategy. See the WGEA Gender strategy toolkit.³²

2 Hold leaders accountable

Commitment by leaders at all levels is the key to gender equality in every organisation. Leaders should be held accountable. Research has found that actions to correct gender pay gaps are three times more effective when combined with reporting to the Executive or Board.³³

3 Support managers to lead flexible teams

Managers play a critical role in enabling and embedding workplace flexibility. Support managers to implement productive, successful flexible working arrangements, including by providing training, workplace policies, tools and resources.

4 Address gender pay equity

Conduct a gender pay gap analysis, set goals and take action. Regularly review your gender pay gap data, implementation of the strategy and actions and changes as a result of actions.

5 Mainstream flexible working

Equitable access to flexible ways of working enhances talent attraction and retention, employee engagement and productivity. Research has found that flexible work arrangements coupled with reporting to Boards increases the share of part-time women managers by 13.6 percentage points.³⁵

6 Set targets for gender composition

Gender-balanced organisations tend to have greater employee engagement and retention. They also have the potential to perform better than organisations that are dominated by one gender.

7 Provide employer funded paid parental leave

Research has found that employer-funded paid parental leave (PPL) schemes covering at least 13 weeks, halves the share of women managers who stop working during PPL relative to those who access only the Australian Government PPL scheme.³⁴

8 Provide professional development, networking, mentoring, sponsorship opportunities for all employees, including part time workers

Professional development, including networking, mentoring and sponsoring are all important to promote gender balance in an organisation. Research suggests that without deliberate focus, these opportunities can be delivered in a biased way that is not gender-balanced.

9 Review recruitment, selection and promotion processes

Gender-balanced recruitment, selection and promotion play a key part of workplace gender equality and inclusion. Robust data analysis and rigorous practice in this area can help to shine a light on gender biases that may occur during recruitment and promotion processes. Look at WGEA's guide on gender equitable recruitment and promotion.

10 Prevent gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying

Educating workers on their rights and obligations regarding gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying is important. The aim should be to eliminate harassment, discrimination and bullying in the workplace and promote an inclusive culture through behaviours reinforced by education and training.

Consultation



All Western Australians were invited to have their say through an extensive consultation process that used a range of formats to encourage input from a wide range of individuals and groups.

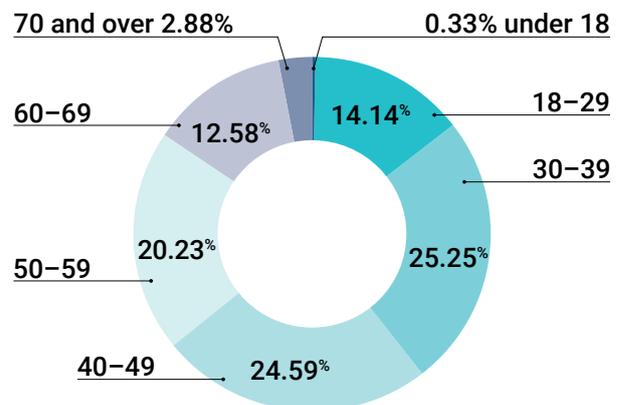
Consultations occurred throughout 2019, with ongoing conversations taking place as the Plan was developed and these will continue throughout implementation.

A draft Plan was circulated for further feedback from the community.

Online survey

- 1,963 people took the online survey
- 3.16 per cent of respondents identify as Aboriginal
- 72.34 per cent were born in Australia
- 9.17 per cent speak a language other than English at home
- 8.31 per cent identify as a person with disability
- 6.88 per cent identify as LGBTQI+
- 29.92 per cent live in a rural, regional or remote location
- 92.86 per cent identify as women

Age groups



Postcards and posters

Postcards and posters were available for organisations to promote the consultations to their communities and support their members and networks to have their say.

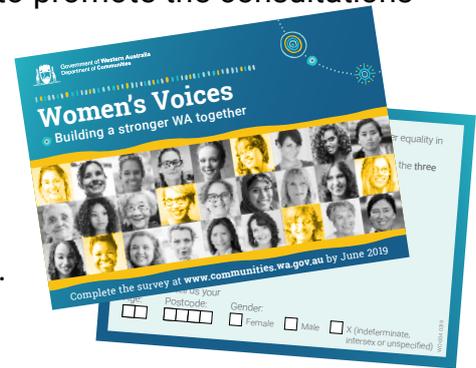
Postcards and posters

Postcards and posters were available for organisations to promote the consultations to their communities and support their members and networks to have their say.

The postcards asked people to identify the three main issues for women in Western Australia and were made available at Community Resource Centres, women's health centres, universities and community organisations.

This method was intended to enable people to have their say even if they don't have access to the internet.

- A total of 109 completed postcards were received
- 93.6 per cent identify as women
- 77.2 per cent live in metropolitan locations
- 22.8 per cent live in rural or regional locations



E-postcard

An online version of the postcard was available for people who have access to the internet and preferred to send a brief comment, rather than complete the survey.

- 220 people completed the e-postcard on the Department of Communities website
- 95 per cent identify as women
- 64 per cent live in metropolitan locations
- 20 per cent live in rural or regional locations (16 per cent not stated)

Submissions

A total of 25 written submissions were received from business and community sector organisations.

Consultations

Consultation sessions were held throughout Western Australia, hosted by Members of Parliament, local governments, peak bodies, business and community sector organisations and women's groups. This method of consultation enabled people in the community to participate in consultations within settings that were familiar and responsive to their specific circumstances. This can be particularly important for people from marginalised and vulnerable groups who may feel inhibited within mainstream settings and their voices may not be heard.

- 23 organisations held a total of 45 consultation sessions
- Over 830 people participated in the consultation sessions

Demographic data was not available for many of the consultations so a breakdown is not provided.



Key findings

Gender equality

The online survey asked respondents whether they believed there is currently gender equality in Western Australia.

- 28.42 per cent of survey respondents consider that gender equality has NOT been achieved in Western Australia
- 57.22 per cent believe gender equality has been achieved in SOME areas
- 11.43 per cent believe gender equality has been achieved in MOST areas
- 2.93 per cent believe gender equality has been achieved in ALL areas

Leading issues identified from the survey and during consultation

Survey respondents identified the following issues as having significant impact on women in Western Australia:

- balancing work and family responsibilities
- family and domestic violence
- attitudes to women
- women's leadership
- financial security/insecurity.

Community organisations held consultation sessions with specific groups that experience multiple, intersecting levels of disadvantage. Several key issues were identified in these sessions:

- Culture is central to the lives of Aboriginal women and strong culture supports healing and connection. Women's empowerment is important to their future. Cultural practices need to be embedded in services.
- The concept of gender equality may be unfamiliar for some women from refugee and migrant backgrounds, whose cultures have very strict gender roles that define women as subordinate to men. Women from these cultures may find it difficult to have these roles and their religious beliefs challenged.

- It is acknowledged that different social identifiers can overlap or intersect resulting in some women experiencing multiple layers of discrimination and/or disadvantage.
- There is a lack of opportunities and access to services and supports for women in some rural, regional and remote geographical locations which can perpetuate ongoing gender inequalities.

Feedback on draft

The draft Plan was released for public comment in late 2019 through an online survey and a total of 172 responses were received.

More than 90 per cent of respondents felt that the vision of the Plan is either achievable or somewhat achievable over the next ten years.

The three outcomes considered by respondents to be most important were:

- Women are safe and free from violence, discrimination and harassment in their homes, at work and in the community.
- Women attain financial independence, including in retirement.
- Women receive the same pay as men for doing the same work or work of comparable value.

The majority of respondents (54 per cent) believe that the Plan will be effective or very effective in driving gender equality in Western Australia, with a further 29 per cent being unsure or providing a neutral response. Nearly 18 per cent of respondents believe the Plan will be either ineffective or very ineffective in driving gender equality.

Many comments on this question highlighted that 10 years is not long enough to counter past systemic discrimination and change attitudes. It was noted by many that long-term generational change is needed and that the Plan will contribute to that change. Responses also noted that strong commitment and support from Government and all sectors of the community will be necessary to implement the Plan. Many people also commented on particular challenges that exist in addressing gender inequality in Australia, due to historical norms of gender roles that are entrenched in Australian culture.



Outcomes framework



Table – Western Australian gender equality outcomes framework

 Priority area: Health and wellbeing Goal: Women are healthy, active and lead fulfilled lives		
Desired outcomes	Indicators	Actions
Women are healthy and have a positive sense of wellbeing	Women's self-reported health status increases Improved mental health outcomes for women	WA Women's Health and Wellbeing Policy
Women have access to health (including maternal, sexual and reproductive health) and mental health services which reflect their needs according to their life stage, race, social, cultural, psychological and economic circumstances	Increased contact with health services by women from vulnerable groups	Expand telehealth and interactive technologies for women in regional, rural and remote WA Enhance and support equitable access to maternal, reproductive and sexual health services
The gap in life expectancy and health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women is closed	Increased life expectancy for Aboriginal women, lower rates of diabetes	Initiatives to co-design programs that increase healthy lifestyle awareness and behaviours for Aboriginal women
Women lead healthy lifestyles and exposure to injury, illnesses and diseases is minimised	Increased women's participation in sport and physical activity Improvement in lifestyle and risk factors	Promote and actively support healthy behaviours and healthy ageing in all women Increase messaging to women about modifiable risk factors associated with the development of chronic conditions Focus on early intervention, diagnosis and access to mental health care Provide information to educate and support women with chronic conditions to navigate the health system
Aboriginal and CaLD women increase their participation in screening for breast and other cancers	Increased rates of cancer screening for Aboriginal and CaLD women	Increase education and access for cancer screening Promote culturally secure health screening and testing services



Priority area: Safety and justice

Goal: Women live safely and have appropriate access to adequate legal protections

Desired outcomes	Indicators	Actions
Women are safe and free from violence, discrimination and harassment in their homes, at work and in the community	Reduced reports of sexual abuse and harassment Reduced reports of workplace gendered discrimination	Health services to prioritise the delivery of safe, trauma informed services for women experiencing violence Develop capacity for early intervention across sectors Support victims to rebuild their lives Strengthen understandings and responses to victims from diverse groups
Perpetrators change their behaviour and are held accountable for their actions	Reduced rates of violence against women. Increased participation in perpetrator programs	Improve accessibility and options to engage in behaviour change programs, including in regional and remote areas Explore and expand the knowledge base on supported accommodation programs for perpetrators Consider the role of the justice system in administering consistent consequences for perpetrators
WA Aboriginal women's imprisonment and involvement in the criminal justice system are reduced	Reduced number of Aboriginal women in prison	Working in partnership with Aboriginal communities on prevention strategies to enable and empower Aboriginal people to live healthy and prosperous lives



Priority area: Economic independence

Goal: Women can be financially independent across all life stages

Desired outcomes	Indicators	Actions
Women and girls participate in a broad range of education and training fields, including in disciplines traditionally dominated by men such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)	Increased rates of women completing Year 12 courses in STEM Increased rates of women entering and remaining in STEM occupations	Implementing initiatives that support female students to pursue STEM based subjects to Year 12 level Promoting and encouraging STEM outreach programs, partnerships, scholarships and awards that target women Developing and supporting initiatives across all sectors that highlight female role models in STEM Encouraging a commitment across all sectors to increase female participation in STEM and reduce barriers for women in STEM roles

Desired outcomes	Indicators	Actions
Women have access to secure and affordable housing	Reduced rates of women identifying as homeless or accessing homelessness services. Decreased rates of women living in poverty	Develop and implement tailored responses for women who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, including older women and women and their children affected by family and domestic violence
Women receive the same pay as men for doing the same work or work of comparable value	Reduced gender pay gap. Improved superannuation balances for women at retirement	Implement initiatives including gender pay audits, reporting of outcomes of audits, development of policies to reduce gender pay gaps
Participation of women in the workforce is supported and expanded	Increased rate of workforce participation for women	Supporting initiatives that increase women's financial literacy
Women and men are supported to share caring responsibilities	Increased rates of fathers accessing flexible work arrangements to care for children and other family members	Improve access to flexible working arrangements and encourage take-up by men and women



Priority area: Leadership

Goal: Women's skills, achievements and strengths are valued, enabling them to participate equally in the community, including at leadership levels

Desired outcomes	Indicators	Actions
Women participate fully at leadership levels within community, business and government organisations, including boards and committees	Increase in percentage of women on government boards and committees Increase in percentage of women at SES level in State Government agencies Increase in percentage of women on ASX200 boards Increase in the percentage of women at CEO and key management levels in the corporate sector Increase in numbers of senior lawyers and barristers	Policies and strategies to enable women to access leadership and pipeline roles Provide incentives to business to employ women in traditionally male-dominated trade occupations
Women participate fully in appointed and elected offices	Increased rates of women in elected positions in state and local government. Improved rates of women judges and magistrates	Implement initiatives that attract and support women to nominate for public office

Definitions

What is gender equality?

Gender equality means that all people, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities, rights, resources, and access to wellbeing, safety and justice.

Gender equality doesn't mean that everyone has exactly the same abilities or strengths. It does mean that we value women's achievements, strengths and opinions objectively rather than measuring them against men's achievements, strengths and opinions.

The terms gender equality and gender equity are both used in this plan but have different meanings. Equity refers to strategies that are intended to ensure fairness overall, taking into consideration any existing inequalities or past unfairness (Figure 1).



It is not just about trying to fit women into a world shaped to fit men, but reshaping the structural fabric, rules, practices and norms to fit both women and men.



Survey respondent



Figure 1. Equality vs Equity

The United Nations notes that gender equality is a fundamental requirement for achieving a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.³⁶

Common terms

- **Women** in the context of Stronger Together includes anyone who identifies and lives as a woman.
- **Sex** identifies biological differences, typically categorised on the basis of reproductive organs.
- **Gender** refers to socially constructed differences between women and men. These social differences are learned, changeable over time and vary within and between contexts and cultures. Gender is learned through social systems, cultural beliefs and attitudes.
- **Sex-role stereotyping** refers to entrenched and pervasive expectations and beliefs about the roles of women and men.
- **Intersectionality** means the many ways that different social categories can overlap or intersect resulting in some people experiencing more than one type of discrimination or disadvantage.
- **Family and domestic violence** refers to the intentional and systemic use of violence and abuse to control, coerce or create fear. It most commonly refers to violence and abuse against an intimate partner but can also occur between other family members. It may include emotional/psychological abuse, physical assault, sexual assault, social isolation, financial abuse and spiritual abuse.
- **LGBTIQ+** is used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, questioning and queer identifying people. It is recognised that this acronym has limitations in accurately representing the diversity of identities, sexualities, genders and lived experiences.
- **European settlement** in the Australian context refers to the British invasion of land that Aboriginal people had inhabited for tens of thousands of years. The land was defined by the British as terra nullius, or unoccupied, and Aboriginal people's rights were ignored resulting in conflict. Policies were implemented that treated Aboriginal people as inferior and denied them many rights.

Appendix 1



Policy context

Stronger Together is informed by a range of national and international frameworks and other instruments that advance gender equality and support women's rights, including those listed below. Western Australia has an obligation to meet the objectives of some of these frameworks.

International

- **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).** Australia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (the Convention) in 1983 and reports periodically to CEDAW on compliance with the Convention.³⁷
- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – Goal 5.** In 2015, 193 members states, including Australia, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.³⁸
- **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – Beijing Declaration.** The CSW is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. In 1995, Australia and other countries attending the World Conference on Women adopted the Declaration and Platform for Action which affirms that equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice.³⁹
- **The Global Gender Gap Index.** This was developed by the World Economic Forum to measure the progress made by countries towards closing the gender gap across four areas of human rights – health and survival, educational attainment, economical participation and political empowerment. Within this index, Australia is currently ranked 44 out of 153 countries in 2020; a drop from 15 in 2006 but still an improvement on 46 in 2016.⁴⁰

National

- **Our Watch.** In 2017, Western Australia became a member of Our Watch, which is a national organisation that was established to drive change in the culture, behaviours and power imbalances that lead to violence against women.⁴¹
- **National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (National Plan).** The Council of Australian Governments endorsed the National Plan in 2010 to set out what governments are doing to ensure that Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities.⁴²
- **Change the Story:** National framework for the prevention of violence against women and their children. This framework is an initiative of the National Plan and was developed by Our Watch, VicHealth and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS).⁴³
- **National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030.** National approach to improving health outcomes for all women and girls in Australia.⁴⁴
- **Women's Economic Security Statement.** Released by the Office for Women in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in 2018 to support measures to increase women's workforce participation.⁴⁵
- **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018.** A whole of government policy to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions under the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The 2019-2029 action plan is currently being developed.⁴⁶
- **Women in STEM Decadal Plan.** Released by the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering in 2019 to support work towards improving the representation of women in STEM.⁴⁷

State

- **Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity.** The Western Australian Government's targets program to deliver better outcomes for all Western Australians.⁴⁸
- **Equal Opportunity Act 1984.** The aim of the act is to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination and harassment and to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the equality of men and women.⁴⁹
- **The Policy Framework for Substantive Equality 2014.** Developed by the Equal Opportunity Commission to guide the development and review of services in Western Australia to achieve equitable outcomes.⁵⁰
- **Department of Communities Strategic Plan 2019–2023.** A plan that outlines the Department's purpose, values, and directions. The purpose is to create pathways that enable individual, family and community wellbeing.⁵¹
- **Draft Community Services Outcomes Measurement Framework.** Developed to meet the government's election commitments to 'Deliver an agreed-upon framework to measure outcomes across the community services sector'.
- **Draft Department of Communities Outcomes Framework.** Establishes a suite of outcomes, including associated indicators and measures, to link Departmental activity to its contribution in achieving our desired outcomes.

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