

Foreword



Message from the Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

The contribution of women and girls to Queensland is profound. Over the last few years, we have seen advancements in gender equality that have supported more women and girls to be able to fully and freely participate in the vast opportunities Queensland has to offer.

The Queensland Government is proud of action and achievements under the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2016–21*. We've created more pathways for women's education and employment, delivered vital health and wellbeing services, supported more women to take up leadership roles, recognised and celebrated the achievements of leading Queensland women in a variety of fields and continue to make crucial reforms to address women and girls' safety.

But we know more needs to be done. Women and girls continue to be impacted by persistent gender inequality in Queensland, nationally and globally.

The timing for further action to advance women and girls and to work towards gender equality could not be more important. We recognise that momentum for change is building across Australia and we need to re-examine how we can best drive change in Queensland.

We are committed to making sure that the way forward is inclusive of the lessons learned from the past. This includes from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had disproportionate impacts on women, often exacerbating long-held underlying inequalities. We also know that to achieve gender equality there must be cultural and attitude change and that women's economic empowerment is vital.

To make sure we get this right, the Queensland Government is undertaking extensive state-wide consultation to inform this government's next Queensland Women's Strategy, to be released later this year. We want all Queenslanders to have their say. We know that women and girls can share similar experiences but that also they can be quite different. From the Torres Strait, to the Gold Coast, to our communities in the west and all in between, we want to make sure a new Queensland Women's Strategy reflects this diversity and is a strategy for all Queensland women and girls. We also want to hear from all Queenslanders, including men and boys, as we all have a role to play to truly build a Queensland community that respects women and embraces gender equality.

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Hon Shannon Fentiman

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Discussion paper: a new strategy for Queensland women and girls

Our approach

Challenges and persistent barriers impacting on women and girls that drive gender inequality are complex and intersectional.

That's why the needs of women and girls are priorities across the work of the Queensland Government. Examples of this intersectionality work includes the:

- Domestic and Family
 Violence Prevention Strategy
 2016–2021 and associated
 policy frameworks
- Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence
- Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027
- My Health, Queensland future: Advancing health 2026
- Multicultural Action Plan 2019–20 to 2021–22
- ► The Department of Education's Respectful Relationships Program

Have you considered sharing your experience and insight with the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce?

Find out more www.womenstaskforce.qld.gov.au.



Introduction

The Queensland Government is committed to advancing the rights and interests of women and girls and to work to achieve gender equality in Queensland. We have heard women loudly say that 'enough is enough' and action needs to be taken to address the ongoing economic and social inequality facing Australian women.

That is why the Queensland Government will be developing a new women's strategy. We are proud of the progress made under the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2016–2021*, and the new strategy will build on the progress and achievements made.

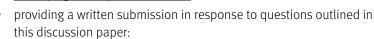
To develop the new strategy, due for release in late 2021, the Queensland Government is leading statewide consultation and is inviting feedback from all Queenslanders. We recognise that the challenges experienced by women and girls, and the barriers to achieving gender equality, are well documented, researched and advocated for. With this in mind, consultation is focused on ensuring that the new strategy captures the priorities of women and girls appropriately and that associated government-led responses best deliver change for Queensland.

This discussion paper has been developed to support the consultation process, including proposing discussion questions for consideration.

Opportunities to have your say

There are a number of ways you can have your say to inform the development of a new women's strategy. This includes:

- scanning the QR code to take you to the online survey
- completing the online survey by visiting www.qld.gov.au/qwsconsultation



- by email: send your submission to women@qld.gov.au
- by post: send your submission to Office for Women and Violence Prevention, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, GPO Box 149, BRISBANE QLD 4001.

The closing date for completion of the online survey and to submit a written submission is by **5pm Friday 8 October 2021**.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. For assistance to understand this discussion paper, call Women's Infolink on **1800 177 577** (free-call statewide service, available Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).



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Gender equality: what is it?

Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. In a gender equal society, all genders have equal conditions and opportunities to contribute to—and benefit from—economic, social, cultural and political opportunities.

Gender equality: progress in Queensland

The Queensland Government is proud of its achievements towards gender equality. Under the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2016–21* the Palaszczuk Government has invested in supporting the advancement of Queensland women and girls across the priority areas of: participation and leadership; economic security; safety; and health and wellbeing.

Snapshot of progress and achievements:

- More than 350 First Nations women have participated in the Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program since it began in 2009.
- ▶ More than **31,000** women have benefited from the Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) initiative, with more than half securing a job as a direct result of participating in SQW. We are investing \$320 million over 4 years and **\$80 million** each year ongoing to support this program.
- We invested \$25 million in 2020-21 in small business grants with a focus on regions as well as young Queenslanders, women, social enterprises, culturally and linguistically diverse people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- To end violence against women and girls, the Queensland Government has invested more \$600 million dollars since 2015. This includes funding to open seven new women's shelters, the first opened in Queensland in over 20 years.
- ▶ In October 2019 announced that all **140**recommendations in the landmark Not Now,
 Not Ever; Putting an end to domestic and family
 violence in Queensland report had been delivered.
- Amended the *Queensland Government Framework* for Considering Proposals to Establish Memorials and Monuments of Significance to increase the representation of women and girls in memorials and monuments in Queensland.

- Established the independent Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (Taskforce), chaired by the Honourable Margaret McMurdo AC, to examine coercive control and review the need for a specific offence of commit domestic violence, and the experience of women across the criminal justice system.
- Delivery of the Respectful Relationships Education program throughout Queensland schools to support students to develop respectful and ethical relationships free of violence. We are also examining whether existing education adequately address sexual consent and reporting in Queensland schools.
- Queensland led the nation in becoming the first state to legislate 10 days paid domestic and family violence leave for Queensland Government employees.
- ▶ In 2018, we passed historic laws so that Queensland women can now legally access termination of pregnancy services, removing it from the criminal code.
- We are investing \$1.2 million for five years to support young women transitioning from care to independence.
- ▶ We invested **\$8.4 million** across 21 Women's Health and Wellbeing Services and \$60 million in breast screening services across 2020–21.
- **\$2.5 million** is being invested to give students free access to sanitary products at 120 state and non-state schools.
- We have improved female sport and recreation facilities and developed equitable pathways to success in high performance sport through the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.
- Made changes to ensure more women and girls are recognised in public spaces through monuments or memorials on Oueensland Government land.
- Established Queensland Women's Week in 2016 to celebrate the diversity and contribution of Queensland women and girls.
- ▶ Eight out of 18 Queensland cabinet ministers are women.
- Latest results show women comprise 54 per cent of Queensland Government boards, beating our 2015 target of 50 per cent.

For information about the *Queensland Women's Strategy* 2016–21 and associated achievements and information, please visit www.qld.gov.au/womensstrategy

Gender equality: a current picture

While there have been significant achievements and advancements for women and girls, there is still much more work to be done to move towards a society where gender equality truly exists.

Globally, based on current trajectories, it will take 135.6 years to close the gender gap worldwide. This gap is benchmarked against four critical areas including:



economic participation and opportunity—estimated at taking **267.6 years** to close



political empowerment estimated at taking **145.5 years** to close



educational attainment estimated at taking **14.2 years** to close



Since 2006, Australia has regressed in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Index, falling from 15th in the world to 50th in 2021. Alarmingly, this includes gender equality in economic participation and opportunity dropping from a ranking of 12 in 2006 to 70 in 20214. Whilst Australia retains the ranking of first for gender equality in educational attainment, it is evident that there are entrenched barriers preventing women's and girl's participation in education to transcend into economic, wellbeing, social and leadership benefits. In Australia, it is estimated to take another 26 years to close the full-time total remuneration gender pay gap.

In Queensland women continue to participate in the workforce at lower rates compared to men and are much more likely to work part-time and access these arrangements to care for children. Women also continue to be over-represented in lower paid roles and industries. This has contributed to Queensland's gender pay gap of 13.4 per cent, the second biggest gap in Australian jurisdictions behind Western Australia (22.9 per cent)⁵. Additionally, on average, every age group of women in Queensland have lower levels of superannuation.

Research also indicates that in Australia, 56 per cent of people thought men had a better life compared to women, with only 22 per cent suggesting no particular gender had a better life. Furthermore, 69 per cent believe men have more opportunities when it comes to getting higher paid jobs compared to women, with only 1 per cent suggesting women have more opportunities⁶.

We also know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate economic and social impact on women. Female dominated industries were among the hardest hit economically and women continued to take a leading role in caring for children and vulnerable family members and experienced associated disruptions to work hours⁷. For many women, the pandemic also coincided with the onset or escalation of violence and abuse⁸.

Evidence also tells us that, for various and complex reasons, some women and girls are more likely to face greater inequity and challenges, and many women experience multiple, intersecting layers of unequal treatment. This includes women with disability; women living in regional, rural or remote areas; women experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic and family violence; older women; women with diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity; women in prison; and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We know that gender inequality has a significant impact on Australia's First Nations women and girls who are over-represented in many indicators of disadvantage. It is acknowledged that 'historical and current events and issues impact the day to day existence and wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and racism and gender inequalities compound these'.9

Gender inequality: impacts on Queensland women and girls

Research shows us that gender inequality does not just impact women and girls once in their life. It has a compounding effect that has lasting impacts over their lifetime¹⁰ in the areas of their economic security, health and wellbeing and social participation. For example, women are likely to earn less, be less likely to advance in their career, accumulate less superannuation and savings than their male counterparts, and will therefore be more likely to live in poverty in old age¹¹.

In Queensland, statistics show that gender inequality persists across women's economic security, leadership, social participation, safety and health and wellbeing. We also know that the impact on First Nations women and girls can be more significant.

- Workforce participation: Females constitute 48.6% of total employed persons. Of all employed persons, 26.1% are females working full-time and 22.5% are females working part-time.
- Occupation segregation: Females represent 77.3% of clerical and administrative workers, but 9.7% of machinery operators and drivers, and 16.0% of technicians and trades workers.
- Poverty: Females account for 57.3% of people accessing government-funded specialist homelessness services.
- Domestic, family and sexual violence: One in six women has experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner, with one in four experiencing emotional abuse¹².
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 32 times as likely to be hospitalised due to family violence as non-Indigenous women¹³.
- ▶ Between one quarter and one half of women who have been subjected to domestic violence report having lost a job, at least in part due to the violence¹⁴.
- Sexual harassment: Almost two in five women (39 per cent) have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past five years, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more likely to experience workplace sexual harassment than people who are non-Indigenous¹⁵.
- Percentage of unpaid work: 30.4% of females, compared with 11.5% of males, aged 15 years and older, spend 15 hours or more every week on unpaid domestic activities.
- Percentage of women accessing part-time arrangements to care for children: 30.8% of working mothers, compared with 3.8% of working fathers, use part-time work to care for a child.
- Percentage of female carers in Queensland: Females comprise 71.9% of all primary carers.
- Gender pay and superannuation gap:
 - On average, females earn **13.4%** less than men in a full-time working week.
 - In every age group on average females have lower superannuation balances, with those aged **70 years** and over showing the largest gap: **30.9**%.



Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action We also know that women's experiences of gender inequality hinder the wellbeing, livelihoods and opportunities of children, their families and the sustainable development of countries and societies¹⁶. For example, research indicates that if the labour force participation gap between men and women was halved, Australia's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would increase by \$60 billion in just 20 years, and the cumulative living standards would also rise by \$140 billion in this time¹⁷.

For more information on gender equality in Queensland, visit www.qld.gov.au/womensstrategy.

Gender inequality: causes

Gender inequality occurs when unequal value and unequal distribution of power, resource and opportunity are afforded to men and women. It is this inequality that constraints the rights and opportunities of women and girls¹⁸.

This inequality manifests across education, employment (including job and industry segregation), safety and levels of bodily autonomy, religious freedom, participation and leadership.

It is underpinned by long-held gender stereotypes, including traditional gender-based roles and norms, conscious and unconscious gender bias and discrimination. Additionally, these traditional gender roles are often undervalued.

Whilst there are indicators that attitudes are generally shifting towards improvements overtime, we know there is still a long way to go. For example, among Australian young people there is still relatively high endorsement of violence-supportive views and low levels of support for gender equality. Furthermore, young people are less likely to support gender equality in private life than in public life¹⁹.

Women continue to remain underrepresented as leaders and under-recognised for their contribution across many domains. This lack of recognition and value further perpetuates the undervaluation of women. This is particularly evident in the workplace where, in Australia, women are underrepresented at every stage of the career pipeline.²⁰

It is these persistent views that can impact young women and girls in their decisions and expectations for the future in subtle and profound ways. This includes from the subjects they choose at school, the careers they pursue²¹, their thoughts about intimate relationships and their own personal beliefs.





The cause of women's economic, social and material disadvantage in Australia begins shortly after birth, and compounds across the life course, resulting in a stark and pernicious inequality between Australian men and women in their older age.

Per Capita 2020

Attitudes that undermine gender equality

- ▶ Undermine women's independence and decision-making in public life.
- Undermine women's independence and decision-making in private life.
- Promote rigid gender roles, stereotypes and expressions.
- Condone male peer relations involving aggression and disrespect towards women.
- ▶ Deny gender inequality is a problem.

ANROWS, 2017



"In Queensland 78.8 per cent of people agree that it is important that our culture respects gender equality and doesn't encourage traditional norms and stereotypes."

> Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2019

Questions to consider:

- What have been the most significant milestones, improvements and/or achievements in gender equality in the last five years?
- What are the top three issues that need to be addressed to achieve gender equality in Queensland, and what are the most important actions to respond to?
- What learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic are critical to inform a new Queensland Women's Strategy?
- What can be done in Queensland to address persistent gender stereotypes, and conscious and unconscious gender bias?

A new Women's Strategy: a future for all Queenslanders

The Queensland Government does not accept that a future for Queensland involves gender inequality.

More needs to be done to ensure that all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Gender equality is not only a human right, but benefits everyone and is vital to creating a safer, more inclusive and prosperous Queensland.

Vision for women, girls and gender equality in Queensland

We believe that gender equality will be achieved when women and girls are safe, valued and able to freely participate in the economic, social and cultural opportunities available. Women should expect to occupy an equal number of leadership positions, be as economically equal and financially secure as men, and share evenly in the benefits available²².

We also want to ensure that the achievements of Queensland women leading in their field and creating community impact are recognised and celebrated. It is important that young women and girls (and boys) can see the range of ways in which women are leading the way so they can be inspired and be the best they can in whatever it is they choose to do. Highlighting stories of women who have succeeded, particularly in areas traditionally male dominated contributes to gender equality by demonstrating that women can indeed do anything.

Questions to consider:

- What do you think would be the most positive difference a new Queensland Women's Strategy could make for women, girls and gender equality in Queensland?
- ▶ What does a gender-equal Queensland look like?
- What do you consider to be the key role of the Queensland Government in addressing the needs of women and girls and driving gender equality?
- How do you think we should celebrate and recognise the achievements of leading Queensland women? Who do you think we should recognise?

Critical factors to best drive change

By listening to the voices of women and girls and their advocates, and through research, the Queensland Government is proposing that a new women's strategy reflect:

- The importance of taking action to address the immediate needs of women and girls, but also work to dismantle persistent, interconnected barriers causing gender inequality.
- ▶ That women's economic empowerment is considered central to realising women's rights and gender equality²³ and requires urgent attention.
- ▶ That more needs to be done to build a Queensland society that values and respects women and girls and that this be improved in our workplaces, communities, schools and at home. In doing this we need to work to dismantle long-held gender stereotypes and gender norms.
- Sustainable and meaningful change requires collective action that recognises the achievements of the past and seeks to build on these through partnerships. This means working with all levels of government as well as corporate and community partners and to further empower individuals to drive change.
- ▶ Taking further opportunities to apply a gender lens in all that we do and encourage others to do the same. Evidence shows us that gender mainstreaming is a strong tool and practice to assist in identifying and addressing inequalities and work to undo the mechanisms that cause them.
- To best support women and girls, responses need to be tailored to their specific needs, including for those women who are more likely to face greater inequity and challenges to fully and freely participate in Queensland life and opportunities.
- A commitment to ensure responses are informed by the voices and experiences of women and girls and action is centred on their needs and interests.
- That gender identity exists across a continuum, and that a strategy for women should recognise all women, including the LGBTIQ+ community.
- A commitment to recognise the diversity of Queensland women and girls, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities.

Questions to consider:

- How can communities and individuals be best supported to address gender equality?
- How can industry and workplaces be best supported to address gender equality?
- How can men and boys, and all genders, be better engaged to support gender equality?
- What are some effective partnerships, grassroots or innovative activities that have positively impacted women, girls and gender equality in Queensland?
- What can be done to further ensure diverse women and girls' voices are heard?

Where to now?

The Queensland Government will continue to engage with Queenslanders to develop the new women's strategy. As well as consultation, the refreshed Queensland Women's Strategy will be informed by previous studies and relevant consultation findings, evaluation reports, current evidence and learnings from the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2016–2021*. The new strategy will be released in late 2021.

For more information about how the Queensland Government is delivering for women and girls, and to find more information about the new strategy:

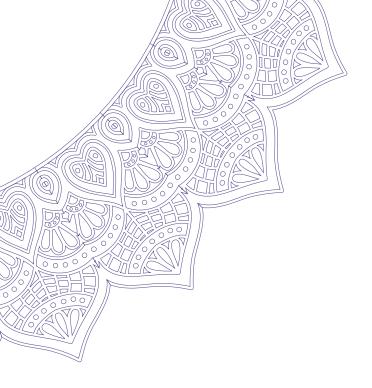
visit www.qld.gov.au/qwsconsultation

contact the Office for Women on email women@qld.gov.au, or

subscribe to the Office for Women's eNewsletter by visiting www.qld.gov.au/community/women/join-mailing-list.

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Consultation for a new

Queensland Women's Strategy

Discussion paper

Version 1 August 2021