



Annual Queensland  
**Women's Statement**  
2024



**Queensland**  
Government



# Annual Queensland Women’s Statement 2024

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**Content warning**

The contents of this document may bring up strong feelings in some readers. Be assured you are not alone, and that there are many services and support groups available to assist in dealing with these. Advice and support is available through:

- 1800RESPECT ([www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)) on 1800 737 732 (24/7 telephone and online crisis support for people impacted by domestic and family violence and sexual violence)
- Lifeline ([www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)) on 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention)
- QLife ([www qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)) on 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight daily LGBTIQ+ telephone and webchat peer support to discuss sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships)

**Acknowledgement of Country**

The Queensland Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nations peoples in the State of Queensland, and acknowledges the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the land and sea. We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique and diverse peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, resilience and strengths. We specifically acknowledge the unique history and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We are dedicated to the inclusion of cultural knowledge and values as critical factors in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions to support First Nations people.

# Premier and Minister’s Statement

This second *Annual Queensland Women’s Statement* outlines the Queensland Government’s ongoing commitment to gender equality, through the implementation of the *Queensland Women’s Strategy 2022–27* (the Strategy).

This statement highlights the work undertaken in 2023 leading to a safer and more prosperous future for Queensland women and girls against each area of the strategy, and our priorities for continuing efforts across government in 2024.

Working together across government agencies, the community and industry, we have managed to achieve a lot.

We are strengthening women’s economic security through our \$16.3 million economic security package, continued implementation of the *Women in Manufacturing Strategy* and the recommendations of the Queensland Training Ombudsman’s report: *Review of Support Provided to Queensland Apprentices and Trainees*, ongoing delivery of Fee-Free TAFE (in which over half of all enrolments have been women) and continued support for women business founders and innovators.

We’ve brought important focus to women and girl’s health through our first *Women and Girls’ Health Strategy*, significant boosts to specialist perinatal and infant mental health services and support, additional funding commitments to increase birthing options, and reforms to ensure women are seen quickly when presenting at a public hospital following sexual assault.

We’re continuing our focus on keeping women and girls safe, strengthening legislation to better protect Queenslanders against the patterned nature of coercive control, appointed a permanent Independent Implementation Supervisor to oversee implementation of the Government Response to Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce recommendations, and the response to the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and

family violence, appointed an interim independent Victims’ Commissioner, and significantly increased financial assistance available to victims of crime.

Other highlights include the re-establishment and strengthening of the Queensland LGBTIQ+ Roundtable to ensure that the voices of the LGBTIQ+ community are heard across government, and the release of the *Queensland Carers Action Plan 2023–2024* ensuring carers, who are overwhelmingly women, are recognised, supported and provided with opportunities.

While it is important to acknowledge and celebrate these achievements, there is still more work to do that will be guided by the Strategy, and we remain focused on gender equality.

In 2024 we will see our first cohort of women participate in Jobs Academy, the commencement of the Women in Trade Apprenticeship Mentoring Program, new grants to support women’s participation and leadership in non-traditional fields, and children and families will benefit from free kindy. We will also build upon the gender analysis work started with the 2023–24 Budget and continue to work with our Australian Government colleagues on a range of initiatives to improve gender equality.

Genuine gender equality and inclusion is a key priority for our government and we will continue to work with all partners to ensure women’s voices are heard and equality is at the heart of our work.



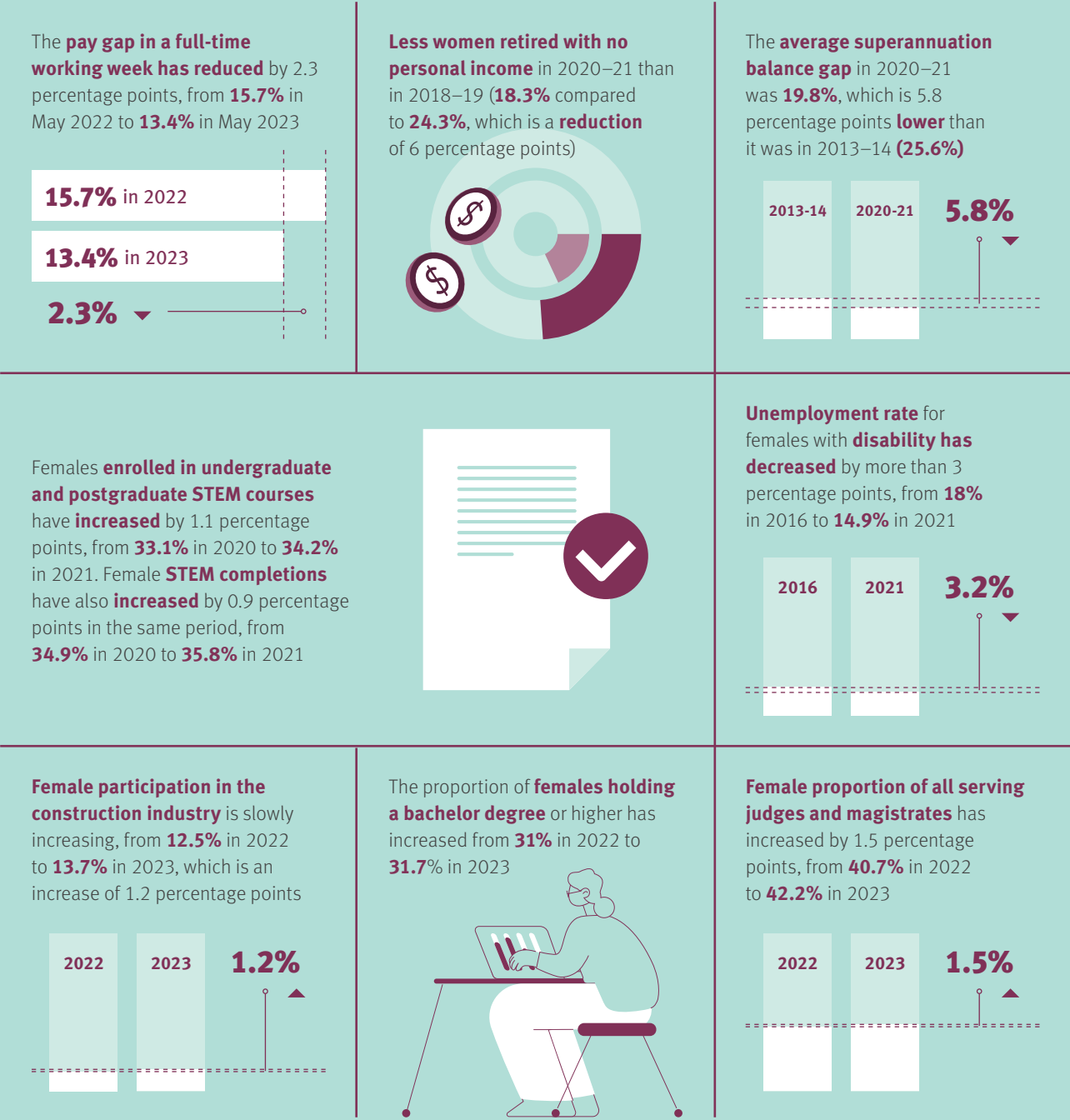
**Hon Steven Miles MP**  
*Premier of Queensland*



**Hon Shannon Fentiman MP**  
*Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women*

# Snapshot of the 2023 Gender Equality Report Cards

Since 2016, the Queensland Government has published the Gender Equality Report Cards (Report Cards). The Report Cards are produced in collaboration with the Queensland Government’s Statistician Office to provide a valuable statistical snapshot of the status of gender equality in Queensland. These insights show the areas where we have made progress and highlight the areas where improvements are still required. Read the full Report Cards at [women.qld.gov.au](https://women.qld.gov.au).



# The work of the Office of the Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity

The Queensland Government is committed to advancing the rights and opportunities for women across the public sector, Queensland’s largest employer. In 2023 the Office of the Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity, within the Public Sector Commission, made significant achievements across the Queensland public sector, including:

- Achieved a reduction in the gender pay gap across the Queensland public sector. The gender pay gap earnings reduced by 1.33 percentage points from 7.64 per cent in June 2022 to 6.31 per cent in June 2023.
- In collaboration with the Public Sector Commission, developed a nation-leading policy framework to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, supporting the safety of women and others in Queensland public sector workplaces.
- Worked with public sector agencies to undertake an inaugural equity and diversity audit and action planning to meet the obligations of the new *Public Sector Act 2022* to progress equity and diversity. The audit provides a sound evidence base to underpin measures that are then included in each agency’s equity and diversity action plan.
- Commissioned research projects to better understand barriers to leadership progression for women leaders in the public sector, including:
  - the 2022 Women’s Voices project heard from the most senior women in the sector about their experiences with promotions, careers and job opportunities
  - analysis of senior executive selection processes, providing insights into the proportion of women in executive candidate pools and appointments
  - analysis of the 2022 Working for Queensland survey, providing insights into the different experiences and perceptions of women in AO8, Senior Officer and Senior Executive Service positions
- Supported an executive women’s network to connect and support the sector’s most senior women leaders.

In addition, the Public Sector Commission continued to invest in building the capability of sector employees to recognise and respond to domestic and family violence. In 2022–23, approximately 76,000 employees completed the Recognise, Respond, Refer training program.

The 2024 focus for the Office of the Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity and the Public Sector Commission will include:

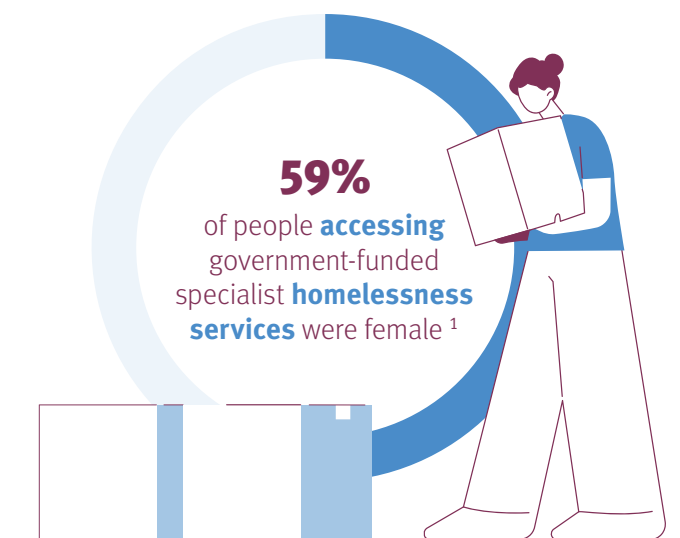
- continuing work to achieve equity in senior leadership roles in the Queensland public sector by 2026
- implementing the new Queensland public sector recruitment and selection processes that combine merit and equity
- continuing to explore and address the factors that are contributing to the gender pay gap, including occupational segregation
- continuing to work with other jurisdictions and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency with the goal of contributing to national data on gender equality and the gender pay gap
- continuing to support agencies across the public sector to build their capacity to prevent and respond to sexual harassment including through each agency developing a policy for preventing and responding to sexual harassment, and providing access to contemporary training, and trained contact officers to advise affected employees
- improving work experiences for Queensland public sector employees who identify as LGBTQ+
- providing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ employment and career outcomes.

# Economic Security

Economic security is about ensuring access to a stable income, secure and affordable housing, and better health, education and training outcomes. The Queensland Government continues to demonstrate a commitment to ensuring women and girls are supported to enable successful economic inclusion and participation through a range of innovative programs and initiatives.

## Key achievements for 2023

- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training:
  - continued implementation of the first Action Plan (2022–2025) of the **Queensland Workforce Strategy**, with five of the actions marked as complete, including the Enhanced Mentoring for Growth program which has seen 201 women mentees participate in mentoring sessions.
  - substantial implementation of the 12 recommendations of the **Queensland Training Ombudsman's report: Review of Support Provided to Queensland Apprentices and Trainees** with 11 recommendations completed as at 31 December 2023, including the launch of the successful *Let's Protect Respect* campaign and free online TAFE courses, as well as assisting employers of apprentices to meet their positive duty in preventing sexual harassment.
  - continued to deliver **Fee-Free TAFE** with more than half of the 66,300+ commencements as at end of November 2023 being female.
- The 2023–24 Budget deliberations saw the introduction of a tool and process to support gender-aware analysis which was assessed in alignment with the Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27. This was the start of **gender responsive budgeting** with further work being undertaken for implementation in future budgets. The Queensland Government is also working with the Australian Government, States and Territories to share progress and approaches to gender responsive budgeting.
- The **Queensland Procurement Strategy 2023** and **Queensland Procurement Policy 2023** were updated to recognise the need to improve access for diversity in suppliers including for women-owned and/or women-led businesses and now include a commitment to flexible procurement measures, including set-asides, to create more opportunities for supplier diversity.
- The **Women in Manufacturing Strategy**, launched in March 2023, has supported the rollout of the Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Toolkit to manufacturers across the state and Toolbox Talks to apprentices to promote an inclusive culture. Mentoring programs to offer support for women to develop their careers in manufacturing have also been developed, along with the Women in Manufacturing Apprenticeship Awards to shine a light on exceptional female apprentices in Queensland's manufacturing workforce.
- The Office of Industrial Relations continued to support Basic Rights Queensland's **Working Women Queensland Service** which provides advice, advocacy and referral services on work-related issues to women in Queensland, in particular targeting women experiencing disadvantage. In 2022–23 more than 40 per cent of the 1,250 women who sought assistance were from regional and remote locations in Queensland.
- The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works continued to support women experiencing housing vulnerability and homelessness through:
  - the **Housing Older Women Support Service** operated by Footprints Community, which offers a specialised housing and support hub for older women experiencing housing distress or homelessness through a statewide online service, and locations in Brisbane and Mackay. There were 1,542 contacts with the hub for the 2022–23 year, since opening in October 2022.
  - increased investment in housing and homelessness services, such as additional funding for **Immediate Housing Response for Families** in 2023–24, and to expand the **Quickstarts Queensland** program to build an additional 500 new social housing homes, which will significantly benefit vulnerable Queenslanders, including older women, who are a growing cohort of homeless people.
- Department of Education released the **Queensland Early Childhood Workforce Strategy 2023–27**. Actions under the strategy will build the capability, and recognise and promote the dedication and expertise of our early childhood professionals, who are overwhelmingly women.
- Department of Environment, Science and Innovation launched two new initiatives in 2023 to build diversity and inclusion in investor networks through:
  - **Accelerating Female Founders program** which funded 11 organisations to deliver a diverse range of initiatives to Queensland female founders to support the development and growth of their businesses. These initiatives will support close to 500 women participants.
  - **Female Founders Co-investment Fund**, a pilot fund that aims to support eligible businesses to leverage funding and build business capacity.
- Department of Transport and Main Roads continued to support women and girls through:
  - delivering a range of **'Women in'** programs designed to support women in non-traditional, high paid, in demand fields including engineering, construction, project management and maritime safety. These programs compliment the **Leadership Ladder** program - a unique undertaking supporting 21 emerging female leaders (as at October 2023) into Senior Officer and Senior Executive Service Officer roles within the department, providing opportunities for networking into industry, learning from other female leaders, as well as supporting department-wide connections.
  - **UNIQ You** sponsorship supporting societal change and gender parity through direct role modelling of women working in the bottom ten industries for gender equality to high school aged female students. In the past 12 months, 515 students from 14 different schools engaged with the program including though more than 1,000 calls between students and advisors.
- QIMR Berghofer continued to demonstrate commitment to helping more female scientists move into, and stay in, scientific leadership roles. The Institute provides women at a Senior Research Officer level, with children below high-school age, up to \$10,000 in financial assistance to make it easier for them to keep publishing research and advancing their careers. In the period between 1 November 2022 and 31 October 2023, 22 women at QIMR Berghofer accessed this financial support.







## Stephanie Bofinger

CEO and Founder of [Fempro Armour](#), **Stephanie Bofinger**, created a range of protective gear designed for injury prevention, catering primarily to women in impact sports and high-risk professions such as the defence forces, security and law enforcement.

The focus is on combining safety with comfort, ensuring that individuals in physically demanding and risky environments are equipped with gear that helps prevent injuries while maintaining ease of movement and functionality. The product range now also extends into hospitals and aged care facilities, to prevent head of femur fractures in both women and men.

Stephanie, an Australian adventurer and entrepreneur (based in Kingaroy), was one of the six female founders that recently completed the [Business and Technology Accelerator Roadmap Development Program for Female Founders](#) with the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing Hub - an [Accelerating Female Founders Program](#) initiative under the Advance Queensland [Backing Female Founders Program](#).

### Key initiatives for 2024

- From 2024 Queensland children can attend a **government-approved kindergarten program for free** in the year before full-time school, which seeks to improve educational and well-being outcomes for Queensland children. Improving the accessibility and affordability of kindy will also support increased workforce participation, particularly for women.
- Department of Environment, Science and Innovation will announce the first successful recipients of the **Female Founders Co-Investment Fund** in 2024 with the fund to continue to be available until exhausted. The second round of **Accelerating Female Founders** will also be launched.
- Department of Energy and Climate, in partnership with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, will support Queensland to become the first Australian State or Territory Government to sign up to the **Equal by 30** campaign, including commitments aimed at closing the gender gap across the clean energy sector.
- Consultation on the **Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland for 2032** will be completed to shape the focus areas, objectives, strategies and actions that will underpin the strategy expected to be delivered in 2024.

In 2024, following consultation and design, several initiatives funded under the \$16.3 million women's economic security package announced in the 2023–24 Budget will commence, backing the skills of Queensland women and helping to address economic inequality.

These include:

- delivery of the **Women in Trade Apprenticeship Mentoring program** to support the increased retention and completion rates for first and second year female apprentices to ensure Queensland has a skilled workforce now and into the future
- commencement of the first cohort of Queensland women in the **Jobs Academy** program empowering Queensland women with the confidence and tools they need to enter or return to the workforce
- application and allocation of the first round of the new **Women in Industry** grant program supporting women and girls' participation and leadership in male-dominated industries will commence
- the redeveloped **Fresh Start for Me** program will be available, providing online resources to support women impacted by domestic and family violence to return to, or enter, the workforce.



# Women's Safety, Health and Wellbeing

The Queensland Government continues to prioritise the safety, health and wellbeing of women and girls through the continued implementation of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce reports, along with the delivery of the *Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy*. Ensuring that women and girls are safe and healthy will improve their overall wellbeing.

## Key achievements for 2023

- Queensland Health:
  - Supported the introduction of legislation to:
    - improve **access to termination services** across the state enabling registered nurses and midwives to administer and supply the termination of pregnancy drug, MS-2 Step in the early stages of pregnancy
    - establish **midwife-to-patient ratios** in Queensland maternity wards and count babies as separate patients when they are in the same room as their parent.
  - Increased funding for **community-based perinatal and infant mental health support** and treatment services, including recruitment of 20 additional mental health clinicians specialising in perinatal and infant mental health, and support for Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA) and Peach Tree.
  - Committed funding to improve **community-based eating disorder services** through the expansion of existing services across Queensland, including two new eating disorder specialist services and 34 additional staff.
  - Through funding from Health and Wellbeing Queensland from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023, 67 one-hour **Periods, Pain and Endometriosis** (PPEP Talk®) Program sessions were provided to 3,791 school students in Years 10–12 in 50 Queensland state high schools. Approximately 45 per cent of these schools have an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage score that indicates educational disadvantage.
- Ensured **Forensic Medicine Examination Kits** and **Forensic Medicine Examination Records** were made available to all Hospital and Health Services as part of the Queensland Health **Sexual Assault Service System Reform** introduced on 31 July 2023.
- Supported 1,698 women experiencing breast cancer, and their families, through the continuum of care during the 2022–23 financial year through continued funding for the **McGrath Breast Care Nurses** program.
- Delivered, through the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, the **Rural Active Women's Program** in Atherton. More than 90 women participated in the 18 week exercise program.
- The Department of Justice and Attorney-General:
  - Continued the implementation of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report recommendations through the:
    - introduction of the **Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023** into the Queensland Parliament which included amendments, that if passed, will introduce an affirmative model of consent, criminalise stealthing and introduce an offence of coercive control
    - establishment of **specialist domestic and family violence courts** in Brisbane and Cairns
    - establishment of the first of three new **High Risk Teams** in Townsville supporting coordinated, multi-agency responses to

keep victim-survivors at high risk from domestic and family violence safe, and to hold persons using violence to account

- research and consultation to develop the new **domestic and family violence and coercive control communications strategy**.
- Appointed a permanent **Independent Implementation Supervisor** to oversee implementation of the government response to the taskforce recommendations as well as the response to the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence recommendations.
- Appointed an interim independent **Victims' Commissioner**, with the permanent appointment anticipated in 2024.
- Significantly increased financial assistance available to victims of crime following the passage of the **Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023**.
- Amended legislation to remove the prohibition on naming persons charged with prescribed sexual offences prior to finalisation of committal proceedings, and a media guide was published to assist in appropriate reporting of sexual violence crimes.
- Facilitated Queensland Government endorsement of the **First Action Plan 2023–27** and the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–25** – the first steps in implementation of the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032*.
- Invested additional funding in **Women's Health and Wellbeing Services** including ongoing funding for 32 specialist sexual assault and women's health and well-being services. This is to meet the growing demand for these services.
- The Department of Education:
  - Had 470 wellbeing professionals employed to provide support to students in 879 schools across the state through the **Student Wellbeing Package**, supporting the commitment that students in all Queensland state primary and secondary schools will have access to an additional wellbeing professional by June 2024.
  - Continued the partnership with Share the Dignity to progress the installation and stocking of **Dignity Vending Machines** (DVMs) in all state schools and a select number of non-state schools in Queensland. At the end of the 2023 school year, 380 DVMs had been installed with more than 140,400 period packs distributed to stock the DVMs.
- The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services released the **Queensland Carers Action Plan 2023–2024** ensuring carers, who are overwhelmingly women, are recognised, supported and provided with opportunities.
- The Department of Tourism and Sport:
  - Progressed the **Youfor2032** program with Phase one of the program identifying and assessing 745 female athletes with potential to compete in the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, representing a total of 43 per cent of those assessed. In Phase two of the program, 236 female athletes were offered an opportunity to progress representing 46 per cent of the cohort.
  - Implemented the **ActiveKIT** initiative in collaboration with Health and Wellbeing Queensland, investing in knowledge, innovation and technology to enable more Queenslanders to be physically active, particularly children and young people, women and people with disability, and strengthen the capability of organisations delivering products and services. Round two of the initiative funded 38 innovative solutions that encourage lifelong movement and break down the barriers that prevent Queenslanders from achieving a sufficient level of physical activity.
  - In conjunction with Tourism and Events Queensland is focused on ensuring the **Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games** will provide a pipeline of major events, such as the 2029 Women's Rugby World Cup, in the lead up to and after the Games. Following the Matildas' success at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, the Queensland Government announced an increase in funding to support women and girls' sport and recreation, including to support new and upgraded changerooms and amenities, and training courses for women and girls to become coaches, umpires, referees or sports club administrators. The Queensland Government has also confirmed its support for Australia's bid to host the Asian Football Confederation Women's Asian Cup 2026.
- The Queensland Police Service (QPS) has:
  - Implemented a six-month trial **embedding police officers** in two non-government organisations (NGOs) – the Brisbane Domestic Violence Service in South Brisbane District and the Domestic Violence Action Centre in Ipswich District – to facilitate improving victim-survivor experiences when reporting domestic and family violence to the QPS, and information sharing between the QPS and NGOs.
  - Committed to a **continuum of training to all QPS members** to further enhance the recognition and detection of coercive control, and developing an improved understanding of the nuances, dynamics and patterned nature of domestic and family violence. As at 30 June 2023, the Coercive Control Online Training Product had been completed by 16,821 members.

## Key initiatives for 2024

- Queensland Health will commence:
  - publicly funded **homebirths** on the Sunshine Coast from mid-2024 – a Queensland first
  - the sixth **Maternal and Child Health Hub** in Eagleby providing support to women through their pregnancy
  - consultation, facilitated by the Queensland Mental Health Commission, to inform the development of resources for women who use drugs as part of *Achieving balance: The Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan 2022–2027*.
- The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, in collaboration with the Queensland Mental Health Commission, will support new, locally led **Social and Emotional Wellbeing** programs to help meet the needs and aspirations of local women and girls.
- The Department of Tourism and Sport will progress the implementation of the **Active Women and Girls Program**, providing funding to encourage greater participation of women and girls across all facets of sport and active recreation, from playing to coaching and volunteering, to umpiring and team management. It is anticipated the program will assist up to 1,600 local or regional sport or recreation organisations to support women and girls through training and education, equipment and resources. Further, up to 120 State Level Organisations and Local Government Authorities will support women and girls through the delivery of programs and promotional activities.
- The Department of Justice and Attorney-General will:
  - develop a whole-of-government domestic, family and sexual violence **strategic investment plan**
  - establish a **High Risk Team** in Redlands to improve integrated responses to keep victim-survivors at high risk from domestic and family violence safe
- develop and implement a **plan for the primary prevention** of violence against women in Queensland
- release a suite of new **online training modules** to underpin integrated service responses.
- implement **co-designed youth sexual violence prevention projects** in Toowoomba and Bundaberg
- support the process to enable the appointment of a **permanent Victims' Commissioner**
- release the *Court Services Queensland Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Violence Safety Framework – Delivering Safer Courts 2024–2034* to enhance the safety of people impacted by domestic and family violence and sexual violence attending courts.
- The Queensland Police Service (QPS) will:
  - continue to establish and enhance the capability of 15 Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Units across Queensland. This initiative is designed to increase the specialist response capabilities, with a focus on improving women's and children's safety, health and wellbeing
  - continue to support efforts to strengthen integrated service responses to domestic and family violence (DFV) through partnerships with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to:
    - trial a co-response model in a number of locations enabling the DFV specialist service system response to begin simultaneously with the QPS intervention
    - embed DFV support workers in police stations across Queensland.

## The Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032



The *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022-27* sets out a commitment to advance the rights and interests of women and girls and reduce gender inequality, including through development of the *Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032* (the Health Strategy), released in early 2024.

The Health Strategy's aim is that "All Queensland women and girls are well and healthy and can participate in social, economic and cultural activities throughout their lives".

Based on extensive consultation and strong evidence for change, the Health Strategy aims to improve health outcomes for women and girls through a life course approach. The Health Strategy particularly focusses on priority communities who face more barriers and have worse health outcomes than the general population.

The whole-of-government Health Strategy will drive improvements that directly support women and girls in Queensland and address the many determinants that impact their health. The Health Strategy's associated Investment Plan outlines new initiatives to address gender-based health inequities and move to rectify imbalances in the current health system. Health equity for women and girls will be driven by new key initiatives including, but not limited to:

- New nurse-led walk-in centres and a pilot of community-based integrated women's services to improve access to culturally safe, gender- and trauma-informed care, including after-hours care
- Delivery of early intervention and prevention advice, tools and programs, including for young girls in schools, to improve health literacy
- Support for research into women and girls' health and translation of research into practice
- Design and implementation of a statewide public fertility preservation and assisted reproductive technology service for people with complex medical conditions
- Additional supports to enable greater access to termination of pregnancy services across Queensland
- Increased access to information, advice, referrals and therapeutic counselling and support for women and girls through phone and online channels, including for pregnancy loss
- Upskilling the clinical workforce, including maternity rotations for regional midwives and nursing and physiotherapy scholarships in pelvic health.

New initiatives aim to address barriers faced by women and girls; lessen costs to individuals, families, and the economy; and improve health outcomes and experiences, enabling women and girls to be healthier for longer.



# Elevating First Nations Women

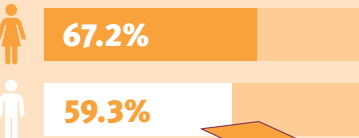
The valuable and unique contribution made by First Nations women and girls to all aspects of the Queensland community is supported and acknowledged by the Queensland Government’s commitment to addressing the barriers and raising up the voices of First Nations women and girls.

## Key achievements for 2023

- On 22 February 2023 the **Path to Treaty Bill** was introduced into the Queensland Parliament to establish foundational legislation to drive the Path to Treaty. The Bill was referred to the Community Support and Services Committee for detailed consideration.
- The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts:
  - launched the Queensland Government’s **Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–2025**, outlining actions in four key areas - relationships, respect, opportunities, accountability and governance – to advance reconciliation and reframe the relationship with Australia’s First Nations Peoples.
  - funded the co-design and implementation of **Domestic and Family Violence Action Plans** in Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council, and Torres Strait Island Regional Council. The plans include culturally appropriate prevention strategies that seek to reduce and prevent domestic violence. Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council have also implemented a social reinvestment project delivering a suite of community-led preventative and social impact projects that aim to reduce DFV through healthy relationships education, digital storytelling, parenting skills and family relationship programs, and street outreach.
  - supported 5 First Nations women to develop their skills as playwrights and build key industry relationships that can support their development into the future as part of the Sparks program, Queensland Performing Arts Centre’s **(QPAC) First Nations Playwright’s Program** in partnership with Playlab Theatre.
- launched the **First Nations Arts Business Hub** which offers access to business resources, including data and grants programs, for First Nations arts and cultural practitioners and businesses, working in parallel to the recently announced Queensland Indigenous Business Network
- launched the **First Nations Arts Business Grants** – up to \$10,000 is available to support Queensland-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural businesses to purchase services that strengthen their sustainability, skills and capacity.
- The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation’s **Queensland Indigenous Women’s Ranger Network** held two workshops to develop skills in leadership, mentoring, team building, cultural practices and media training, with a record 120 women rangers attending the workshop in Cairns in May 2023.
- Queensland Corrective Services funded the **Sisters for Change** program delivered by Australian Red Cross at Townsville Women’s Correctional Centre. The program focuses on improving the mental health, safety and wellbeing of both staff and prisoners to reduce instances of harm and abuse, increase the skills and capacity of women and engage First Nation Elders to improve cultural outcomes for women in custody. In 2022–23, 50 women graduated from the program with an additional 90 women participating in various activities throughout the year, including peer health education sessions, visits with Elders and safe women workshops.

- Queensland Health:
  - provided culturally safe, responsive and targeted care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women residing in the Metro North Hospital and Health Service catchment through the **Women’s Business Shared Pathways program** – a unique model of care and the only one of its kind in Australia. More than 430 specialist gynaecology outpatient appointments, 73 elective surgical procedures, 183 allied health interventions, including physiotherapy and dietetics services, and cultural support have been provided over the past 12 months in the expanded program which is now being delivered two days a week
  - supported **BreastScreen Queensland’s Sistas Shawl**, an initiative of the Metro North Hospital and Health Service, to help increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to access breast screening services. A shawl is gifted to First Nations women to wear during the screening addressing the cultural barrier of women feeling embarrassed. This initiative has seen screening in the Metro North catchment steadily increase since implementation in 2020, with 534 First Nations women participating in breast screening in the 2022–23 financial year. The initiative also recently commenced on the Gold Coast.
- The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, through the **Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant**, has funded **Strong Women Talking - Marigurim Mubi Yangu**, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders Corporation, to support First Nations women to undertake a customised, non-accredited Healing Journey package (domestic, family and sexual violence preventative workshops and training program) to enable them to become facilitators and deliver the package in communities of need.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were more likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males to **continue on to Year 12** <sup>2 3</sup>



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were less likely than their male counterparts to be unemployed with an **unemployment rate** of **12.4%**, compared with **14.3%** <sup>4</sup>







# Waijungbah Jarjums

**Waijungbah Jarjums**, which means ‘place of mother and children’ in traditional Yugambeh language, is a co-designed maternity service at Gold Coast Health. It combines both the Birthing on Country project and the First 1,000 Days Australia principles and is founded on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. The service is the first of its kind in Australia.

Central to the innovation of the Waijungbah Jarjums model of care is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led engagement and consultation across all stages of the innovation process including conception, design, conduct/implementation, reporting and dissemination of findings, ensuring self-determination and community governance over service delivery.

Since its inception in 2019, the service has expanded from 10 Identified staff members to 26 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives, student midwives, nurses, health workers, social workers and administrative staff. In 2022–23, 170 families accessed the service with more than 8,600 individual services delivered.

Waijungbah Jarjums has been extremely successful in improving health outcomes to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Some of the positive outcomes for service users include increased attendance at antenatal visits, less incidence of low birth weights, reduced incidence of babies needing Special Care Nursery or Neonatal Intensive Care Unit admittance, and increased breastfeeding rates.

In recognition of the significant impact this innovative and life changing service is having, it received both the Health and Wellbeing Award and Premier’s Reconciliation Award at the 2023 Queensland Reconciliation Awards.

## Key initiatives for 2024

- The Queensland Government notes the substantial body of work and consultation that has taken place with First Nations women and girls across the country to inform the **Wiyi Yani U Thangani National Summit** and has listened to the outcomes from the Summit. The Queensland Government commits to continuing its work with the Australian Human Rights Commission and relevant partners to support the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit and the National Framework for Action.
- The Department of Justice and Attorney-General will:
  - co-design a whole-of-government and **First Nations community strategy and action plan** in response to Recommendation 1 of the *Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce Report 1*
  - receive the final report on the independent evaluation of the **Community Justice Group (CJG) Program** and **CJG Domestic and Family Violence Enhancement Program** and will work with stakeholders to respond to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.
- Queensland Corrective Services will seek to expand the **Sisters for Change program** into additional women’s correctional facilities.



# Women with diverse backgrounds and experiences

The Queensland Government recognises that hearing the voices of women with diverse backgrounds and experiences is an important element in achieving gender equality. We acknowledge their continued resilience and strength in the face of continued discrimination and disadvantage, and commit to advocating for action to create a truly accessible and equal Queensland for everyone.

## Key achievements for 2023

- The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services:
  - established new services for **Seniors Legal and Support Services** in the Logan City/Beaudesert, Moreton Bay North, Ipswich, Outback Queensland (outreach) and Cape York/Torres Strait Islands (outreach) locations. There are now 16 Seniors Legal and Support Services in Queensland that provide vital support to older Queenslanders who are experiencing or are at risk of elder abuse. Approximately two-thirds of Seniors Legal and Support Service clients are women.
  - delivered **Seniors Social Isolation services** that are tailored to meet the needs of local communities, offering a wide variety of activities. More than half of all clients are older women.
  - extensive consultation was undertaken to contribute to the development of a new statewide **Seniors Strategy**. Almost 5,000 older people had their say on the new strategy with healthcare, cost of living, independence, mobility and staying in their own home as concerns that matter most to people aged 65 and over.
- Queensland Health:
  - **'This is Us'**, a project funded through the Investing in Queensland Women Grant Program, is a partnership between the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Gladstone Regional Council. The project included a portrait photo exhibit, a photobook and a behind-the-scenes video series involving 30 women in business in the Gladstone region. These women shared their stories, triumphs, achievements, obstacles and biases they have overcome in their careers to date so that their successes are visible and normalised.
- continued delivery of the **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Midwifery Group Practice**, through the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, providing culturally appropriate individualised care to 150 mums each year. Data shows CALD women who engage with the CALD Midwifery Group Practice have fewer caesareans, induced labours, epidurals and cases of post-natal depression, as well as higher rates of breastfeeding compared to women who do not engage with the service.
- through Health and Wellbeing **Queensland's funding for the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA) Country Kitchens** program there were 251 QCWA volunteer members trained as QCWA Country Kitchens Facilitators in the 2022–23 financial year. This resulted in 1,139 healthy lifestyle initiatives, including recipe promotions, healthy eating showcases, hands on nutrition workshops and cooking skills classes delivered to 14,742 Queenslanders. Increased engagement with the program has seen more than 20 per cent more facilitators trained and more than 10 per cent additional Queenslanders reached in 2022–23 than in the previous year.
- The Department of Justice and Attorney General:
  - continued to progress the implementation of the **CALD cultural capability project**. This project aims to build the evidence base to better understand what supports and interventions are needed to create long term change to CALD communities in Queensland to have a better understanding of the impact and response to domestic, family and sexual violence

- through the one-off **Keeping Women Safe from Violence Grant Program 2023**, Community Living Association Inc was funded to implement a pilot of their *Mothers' with Intellectual Disability: Parenting with Pride through Healing and Recovery* project. Social workers will facilitate weekly group sessions to build the parenting capacity of women with diagnosed or suspected intellectual disability who are experiencing domestic and family violence.
- The Department of Youth Justice are implementing the **Youth Justice Crime Prevention Grants**. This program will invest in local programs across Queensland to support young people, including young women, who are in contact or at risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system.
- The Motor Accident Insurance Commission (MAIC) Research and Grants program, implemented by Queensland Treasury, has provided funding for the **'Braking the Cycle'** program coordinated by the Police Citizens and Youth Welfare Association (PCYC) across Queensland. This program has seen 1,525 women engaged in the program, with 435 women obtaining their provisional drivers licence. Data collected from PCYC also highlights that of those surveyed post program completion, up to 85 per cent obtain employment or commence further training after they have obtained their provisional licence.
- The **Queensland LGBTIQ+ Roundtable** was re-established and strengthened to ensure that the voices of the LGBTIQ+ community are heard across government to highlight opportunities to ensure that development and delivery of services, policies, programs and strategies are inclusive of, and responsive to, the needs of people of diverse sex, gender and sexuality.
- The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works funded a \$4.6 million package to **help young people at risk of homelessness**. Young Queenslanders who transition from government services to independent living can now access funding of up to \$5,000 per household to help them transition to live independently.
- The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts:
  - in partnership with the Neighbourhood Centre sector, co-designed and released a strategic framework for Neighbourhood Centres. **Neighbourhood Centres – Our shared vision for a vibrant Neighbourhood Centre System in Queensland** (Our Shared Vision) establishes a joint commitment and goals for ongoing partnership. Our Shared Vision seeks to promote the critical role and value of neighbourhood centres to their communities and support their sustainability well into the future.
  - announced that 10 organisations were successful recipients of \$3.4 million in grant funding through the **Communities Innovation Fund**. This funding will support these organisations to refine, implement and evaluate their innovative, community-led responses to social isolation and loneliness across Queensland for a diverse range of cohorts.
  - commenced delivering **Thrive Logan**, a project aimed at connecting Logan's CALD communities and partners with a focus on enhancing women's social and economic participation. In 2023, more than 1,800 women from community, industry and government participated in events, workshops and consultations to work together on opportunities for Logan's CALD women and their community.
- All recipients of the **2024 Premier's Anzac Prize** were women or girls. This prize recognises the efforts and dedication of young Queenslanders, and provides them the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the Anzac legacy by participating in workshops and attending the Anzac Day Dawn Service at the Australian War Memorial in France.

Females accounted for **69.1%** of all alleged victims of **elder abuse** reported to the Elder Abuse Helpline in 2021–22 <sup>5 6</sup>







## Natalia Florez

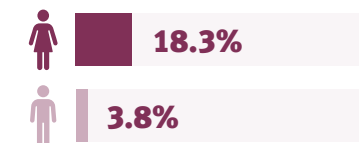
Natalia Florez, a proud Colombian woman living and working on the lands of the Turrbal and Yuggera people is the co-founder of LOGiT.

LOGiT is one of Australia's leading Indigenous businesses, developing software in-house and building careers in tech for community mob. LOGiT has developed **weavr**, a digital solution that supports businesses and government to manage and track their Reconciliation and Social Impact Strategies in a culturally engaging way; embedding Indigenous culture in the organisation's culture.

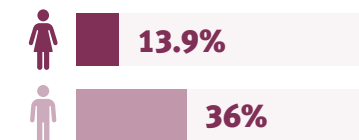
Natalia is currently taking part in the Elevating Female Founders Program delivered by River City Labs. This program provides a strong focus on building connections within the cohort, as well as the wider ecosystem, by meeting female founders where they are in their journey and applying a range of bespoke 1:1 industry-specific, challenge-specific advice, as well as cohort-based activities moving businesses to the next stage, whether from problem statement to idea, or from one customer to 10.

River City Labs was one of the 11 organisations funded under the Advance Queensland Accelerating Female Founders Program who will deliver initiatives to approximately 500 Queensland female founders in 2023–2024.

For **retirees aged 45 years** and over, more women than men **retired with no personal income** <sup>7</sup>



**13.9%** of women were able to **rely on superannuation** as their main source of income at retirement, compared to **36%** of men <sup>8</sup>



**30.4%** of females aged 15–64 years with disability or long-term health condition, **21.3%** of females aged 15–64 years who were born overseas had **no superannuation coverage** <sup>9</sup>



## Key initiatives for 2024

- The Department of Youth Justice:
  - will complete a gap analysis into gendered responses in the Queensland Youth Justice System. This review will look into the **gender responsive approaches within Queensland's youth justice system**, with the aim to provide evidence-based, user-informed recommendations to build and strengthen current responses to girls and young women engaging in the youth justice system
  - will partner with researchers to identify the necessary skills and competencies required to effectively support girls and young women engaged with the youth justice system as part of the **Youth Justice Research Agenda 2023–24**.
- The Department of Justice and Attorney-General is developing a whole-of-government **strategy for women and girls in the criminal justice system as accused persons and offenders** in response to Recommendations 93, 108, 141 and 175 of the *Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce Report 2*.
- The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services will release a new **statewide Seniors Strategy**.
- The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts will continue to work with **Thrive Logan** with a focus on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women's experiences in the health sector.

# Empowerment and recognition

Ensuring the voices and stories of Queensland women are heard and acknowledged is an important factor to ending gender inequality. Queensland women have much to offer and their inclusion is critical to face the ongoing challenges in our communities and to create positive and meaningful change for everyone. The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring they are empowered to achieve their potential and recognised when they do.

## Key achievements for 2023

- The Department of the Premier and Cabinet:
  - delivered a **Women on Boards** event in Cairns, which provided a platform for discussion around gender parity in boardrooms, to encourage non-government boards to set their own targets for gender parity on boards and for board-ready women to register their interest in future opportunities.
  - in partnership with the Office for Women, continued sponsorship of the two-day **Australian Women in Music Awards** event which acknowledges the importance of gender equality and women's contribution across the entire music industry. The 2023 event supported eight Queensland First Nations artists, from regional and remote locations, to participate across all areas of the program.
- Queensland Health:
  - collaborated with Yulu-Burri-Ba, Redland Hospital Physiotherapy Department, BreastScreen Queensland and Chronic Disease, Community and Oral Health, Metro South Hospital and Health Service enabling 13 First Nations women from North Stradbroke Island to attend the first **Women's Wellness Group** in the region.
  - supported 15 high performing female leaders participating in the **Next Generation Program** which provides a talent pipeline and assists capability building and career progression of female leaders into executive leadership roles.
- supported 31 participants in the **Women in Leadership Program**, designed to equip leaders to improve their skills and to assess and improve their workplace. Working collaboratively throughout the Women in Leadership journey, the program provides participants with the skills and confidence to lead more effectively and accelerate their own career, and supports female leaders to create powerful professional networks.
- continued to support the **Investing in Queensland Women** grants program which saw 50 successful applicants across two rounds from community groups and non-government organisations, for a range of initiatives including support for:
  - older women
  - the development of resources for a range of vulnerable women and girls including First Nations young women and girls, and those with intellectual disability
  - International Women's Day events focused on encouraging young girls into STEM
  - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women in film making art
  - workshops for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence to help prevent future technology-facilitated abuse.

- **Voices Shaping the Future**, presented by QPAC and Women of the World Australia, was a two-day celebration of conversations, performances and workshops by and for young women and those interested in their views on gender inequality and intersecting injustices in the world, with participation by over 1,000 women and girls.
- The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries continued support for the national **AgriFutures Rural Women's Award** which aims to empower and celebrate the inclusive and courageous leadership of women involved in Australia's rural and emerging industries, businesses and communities. In 2023 there was one winner and three finalists acknowledged in Queensland. Emma-Louise Gibbons was the recipient of a \$15,000 Westpac bursary for the impact she is creating through her business Huds & Toke.
- The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation, in partnership with the Office for Women and the Queensland Museum, recognised four Queensland women at the **Queensland Women in STEM Prize** awards ceremony in July 2023 for their contributions to STEM and their endeavours to inspire other women and girls to consider STEM careers.
- The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works:
  - subsidised the attendance of 10 women from rural, remote and Indigenous councils at the 2023 **Women in Local Government** annual conference, providing them with valuable insights, effective real-world strategies from experienced officers, and opportunities to network, collaborate and share ideas
- supported 26 departmental staff to attend the 2023 **Women in Planning annual breakfast** and five attendees to the **Women in Planning Development Series** providing women with the opportunity to connect with others in the industry and develop their skills to enable greater success in the planning industry.
- The **Annual Minister's Planning Awards** recognises planning students who have demonstrated innovative and practical approaches to real-world planning challenges - particularly related to engagement and consultation in planning. Since 2021, 10 of the 11 exceptional students recognised have been female, with the winners also receiving a four-week paid internship within the department to provide professional development and networking opportunities.
- The Department of Transport and Main Roads' **Wonder Women Program** takes an active step forward towards acknowledging the contribution and benefits that women make towards the organisation and their community. Women in the workforce are nominated by their colleagues for their leadership, innovation, dedication and advocacy, both at work and in the community. In 2023, the program garnered 89 nominations, resulting in the selection of 10 women who received recognition during the internal ceremony hosted during International Women's Week.
- The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' (QFES) **Women in Fire and Emergency Services Awards** acknowledge members of the QFES workforce, paid and volunteer, who have made an outstanding contribution to the inclusion of women in QFES. Award categories include Outstanding Female Leader, Champion of Change and Mentor of the year, with eight recipients across all categories in 2023.

Females comprised of **54%** of all members **Queensland Government bodies**<sup>10</sup>







## Ruby Stockham

Growing up on the Gold Coast, **Ruby Stockham** was always curious about how the city had transformed over time. That curiosity turned to passion which saw her take on an Urban Planning degree at Griffith University.

In 2021, the final year of her degree, a Professor nominated Ruby for the 'Female Student in Planning Award', one of three categories of the Annual Minister's Planning Awards. The honour of receiving the award was accompanied by a four-week internship with the Planning Group.

Ruby shared, *"My internship with the Planning Group was fundamental to my growth as an emerging planner in the industry, gaining an understanding of the crucial role State government has in shaping Queensland's future. I spent time with four different divisions, supported by mentors who provided me with the invaluable experiences and growth for my professional and personal journey as a Planner."*

Following her internship, she was offered additional opportunities to further her career and skillset within the Planning Group. Now, as part of the Regional and Spatial Planning division, Ruby is working on a range of Regional Plans throughout Queensland which aim to support growth and respond to change over time.



**#femalefaces4publicplaces** is the inspiring campaign of young Brisbane woman, **Malia Knox**.

Following the realisation that there were only three statues of women in Brisbane, Malia began her campaign to change this. In December, she achieved just that, with the launch of an amazing new statue of Dr Abigail Allwood at the Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium.

Dr Allwood is a geologist and astrobiologist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, focusing on the detection of life on other planets and the evolution of life on early Earth. Dr Allwood is also the first woman and the first Australian to be a principal investigator on a Mars Mission.

Women in Technology have spearheaded the partnership that brought Malia's vision to life, working with Statues for Equality, Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government to see the statue become a reality.

The statue, crafted by Gillie and Marc Shattner is a testament to the brilliance of Dr Abigail Allwood and the countless Queensland women who inspire us.

## Key initiatives for 2024

- The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, through Jobs Queensland, will partner with the Business Chamber Queensland to highlight industry endorsed strategies that can help small and medium enterprises harness the benefits of an inclusive and diverse workforce.
- Queensland Rail (QR) will introduce a new **QRWOMEN Collective**, accessible by all QR female employees and designed to build connection and capability, as well as showcase the diversity of our workforce and complement the range of existing QRWOMEN offerings.
- The Department of the Premier and Cabinet, in partnership with the Office for Women, will enter into a new sponsorship arrangement to see the **Australian Women in Music Awards** remain in Queensland for another three years - strengthening the state's leadership in the music space nationally and amplifying the importance of gender equality and women's contribution across the entire music industry.
- The Office for Women will continue to engage with **Queensland Women's Strategy Advisory Group**, who provide a valuable cross section of diverse views and expertise, to guide our ongoing work to deliver and implement the commitments of the *Queensland Women's Strategy*.





## Artwork Acknowledgement: Different Ways by Casey Coolwell-Fisher

Casey Coolwell-Fisher is a Quandamooka woman of the Nunukul people from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). Casey has a creative background in graphic design and is the co-founder and artist, alongside her partner Roy Fisher, of CHABOO, a home decor and design business specialising in hand painted Aboriginal art on wooden products and graphic design art pieces.

Everyone lives differently, have different support systems and achieve goals differently. This artwork consists of different stories, from different living groups, having a yarn and discussing life.

The three main centrepiece elements consist of three different demographic groups, single parents, single persons and parents with child/ren.

The groups are represented in the Boomerangs to signify strength (structure), power (returning abilities), technique (hunting and gathering) and diversity (several uses).

- **Single Parents** - this art piece represents a single parent with child/ren with a big family/community support system.
- **Single Persons** - this art piece represents a single person, creating their own footprints.
- **Parents** - this art piece represents parents with child/ren sharing their stories and creating their own.

The semi-circle in the centre represents a yarning circle that is holding all of the conversations through the line work and creating footprints through the dots.

The background has five different sections representing the yarning circles (conversations) of (from left to right) diversity, self determination, empowerment, safety and security and Wellbeing.

- **Diversity** - this section consists of same same, but different. The curved elements represent different cells mixing and creating diversity amongst one another.
- **Self Determination** - this section is strength of one's being expanding out into the world. The centre 'u' element represents a person with the tiny dots being footprints that expand out through the outer curved lines.
- **Empowerment** - this section is the notion of moving forward and up. The triangle elements represent goals/stepping stones moving upwards, the lines are the tracks being made and the dots are the people helping and supporting us.
- **Safety and Security** - this section represents the safety and security we all need. The centre element signifies a shield, providing security and safety e.g., safety in all situations, employment and economic security etc.
- **Wellbeing** - this section represents our health and wellbeing, physically and mentally. The outer 'u' shaped elements represent the mental and physical of ones self. The lines represent connection, working and learning from one another.

The wavy lines (on the bottom of the artwork) represent the flow of our lives, nothing is in a straight line. We all have our ups and downs.

The hand prints are that of our Ancestors, helping us in our walking lives to achieve our goals and create knowledge for our future generations.

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## Annual Queensland Women's Statement 2024