



ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

**THIRD ACTION
PLAN 2023-26**

**ACT WOMEN'S
PLAN 2016-26**



ACT
Government

Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. The ACT Government acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.



Minister's Foreword

I am pleased to release the **Third Action Plan 2023-26** under the **ACT Women's Plan 2016-26**. This is the final action plan under the current ACT Women's Plan and illustrates the ACT Government's ongoing commitment to supporting women and girls in the ACT. This plan is for everyone in the community, because supporting women, girls and gender diverse members of the community will lead to better outcomes for all of us. In line with this, throughout the Third Action Plan the terms women and girls are used inclusively.

I acknowledge the environment in which this plan is being released, and the ongoing impacts from COVID-19. Women have been disproportionately impacted such as through job losses and caring responsibilities. The ACT community will likely be responding to the impacts of COVID-19 for some time to come.

Despite these challenges, the ACT Government and community sector remain committed to supporting women and girls across the ACT. It is vital that appropriate supports continue to be available, and women and girls are enabled to participate fully in all aspects of society. This is why the ACT Government consulted with the community throughout the development of this plan and will continue to do so through its implementation. After collecting responses from a very diverse group of women across the ACT, similar themes carried through which provided a clear way forward for the Third Action Plan.

One of the guiding principles of the ACT Women's Plan is **intersectionality**. While all women in the community experience disadvantage, all women are **different** and experience disadvantage differently. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, trans women, queer women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, and women with disability experience additional and varied types of discrimination.

Gender equality in the ACT is a shared responsibility – both to protect everything we have achieved, and to continue our nation-leading work to promote

GENDER EQU**ALITY**

*Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Women*


Purpose

The ACT Government is committed to removing barriers to enable women and girls to reach their full potential. The *ACT Women's Plan 2016-26* is an ambitious 10-year plan to continue building an ACT community that values and respects women and girls, commits to gender equality and promotes and protects the rights and the potential of all women and girls. Importantly, the terms women and girls are used inclusively, referring to everyone who describes themselves as a woman or a girl.

The wellbeing, safety and full participation of women and girls in all aspects of society is critical to the wellbeing of the whole community. This includes the ongoing need to call out and address gender-based discrimination and misogynistic attitudes. Despite significant efforts across the country, Australian men continue to hold misogynistic views at a higher rate than the global average, and some Australian women agree with these views.¹ The ACT Women's Plan is a reminder of the need for a sustained response to promote respectful and supportive community attitudes towards women and girls.

“We know that while we are able to celebrate significant progress in addressing violence against women and girls, there are still too many examples of their safety not being upheld in our community.”

(YourSay)



“Women have reverted in social view back to the 1950’s in their expected unpaid work since COVID. Except we are now expected to do our paid roles at optimum capacity due to our “good fortune” to be able to work from home.”

(YourSay survey response)

Themes

The **Third Action Plan 2023-26** is the third and final action plan to be delivered under the *ACT Women's Plan 2016-26*.

As with the First Action Plan and Second Action Plan, the Third Action Plan identifies a range of initiatives across the ACT Government and commits to working together with the community to deliver meaningful change for women and girls in the ACT. The Third Action Plan is seeking to take a targeted approach, for more focused work and a stronger impact in priority areas.

The actions in this plan support 5 overarching themes to improve outcomes for women and girls in the ACT. These themes continue the ACT Government's work to achieve the 5 objectives identified through extensive consultation for the Second Action Plan. These themes continue to be of critical importance for women and girls and include:

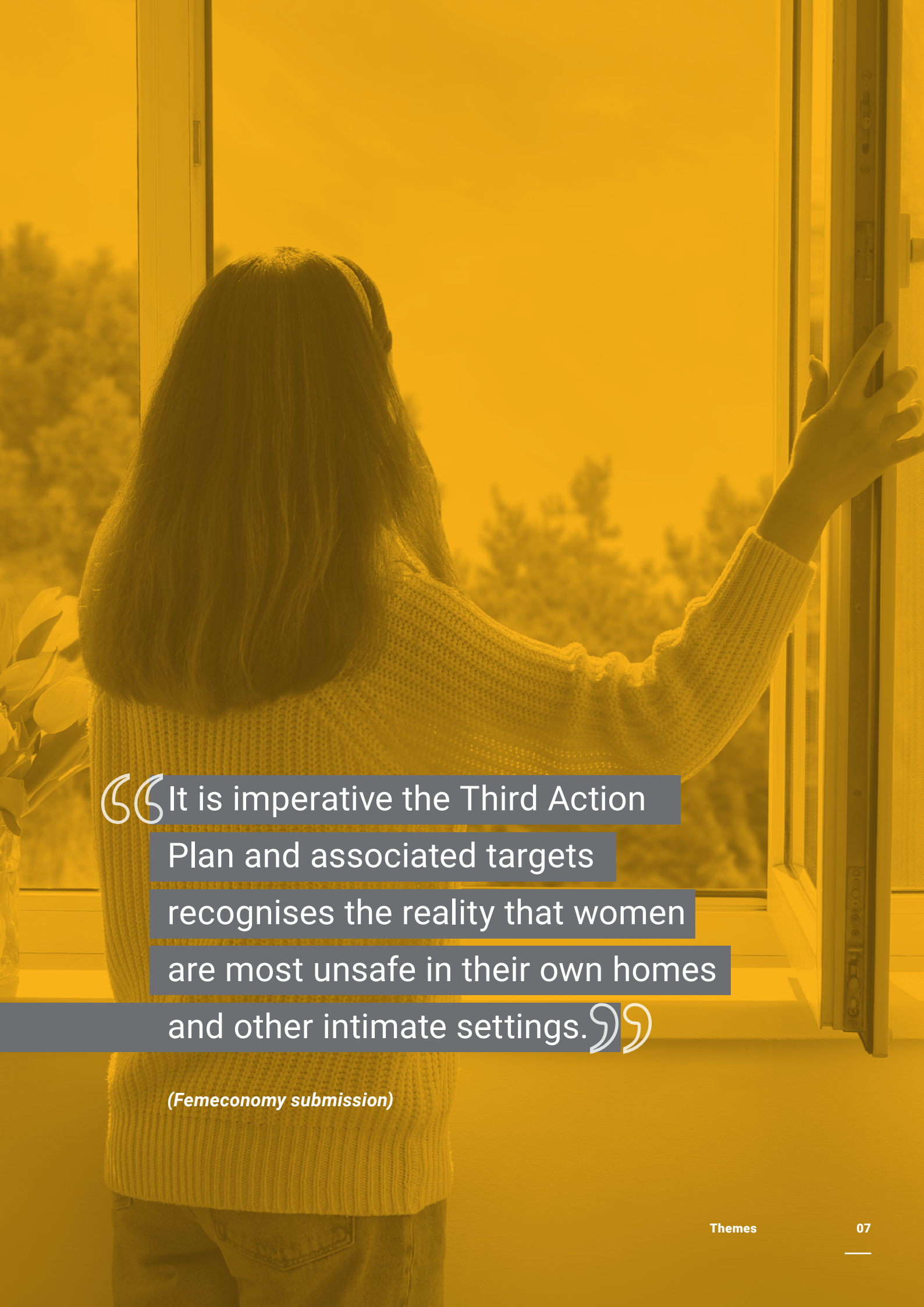
- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Safety and inclusion**
- **Leadership and workforce participation**
- **Housing and homelessness**
- **Appropriate and accessible services**

What next?



The Third Action Plan will be implemented from 2023 to 2026.

As this is the final action plan supporting the ACT Women's Plan, in 2026 an overarching evaluation of the 3 action plans will inform the development of the next ACT Women's Plan.



“It is imperative the Third Action Plan and associated targets recognises the reality that women are most unsafe in their own homes and other intimate settings.”


(Femeconomy submission)

Consultation summary

Stakeholder views and experiences are the foundation of the Third Action Plan, including the crucial role of the ACT Government's Ministerial Advisory Council on Women in its development. Community consultation for the Plan took place between November 2022 and February 2023 and focused on five priority areas: Health and wellbeing, Safety and inclusion, Leadership and workforce participation, Housing and homelessness, and Appropriate and accessible services. Over 30 submissions, 200 individual surveys, and 1,483 community panel survey responses were collected from diverse stakeholders, including various communities, organisations, and sectors.

The consultation identified themes such as health and wellbeing, safety and inclusion, and leadership and workforce participation as significant concerns. There was a demand for more informational resources on women's health, targeted mental health initiatives, and affordable reproductive healthcare. Stakeholders also supported urban design measures for public safety and emphasised the importance of addressing domestic, family, and sexual violence, as well as providing flexible work options. The consultation process will continue throughout the implementation of the Third Action Plan in collaboration with the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women and the ACT community. For additional detail on the Third Action Plan and the Listening Report, which focuses on the findings from consultation, please visit www.act.gov.au/womens-plan.

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

A photograph of two women, one younger and one older, smiling and talking to each other. The image is overlaid with a yellow filter. The text is presented in a series of stacked grey boxes with white text, flanked by large quotation marks.

“ Women-owned businesses
represent women from all walks of
life, allowing women to use their
education, skills and training, and
develop flexible working models
around caring responsibilities. ”



(Femeconomy submission)

Theme One: Health and Wellbeing


Good mental and physical health are key to ensuring overall wellbeing. Women and girls have unique and varied health needs and experiences, such as reproductive and maternal health. However, women and girls face many barriers to accessing appropriate medical services at the right time, including logistical barriers, caring responsibilities, cultural safety and the way women are perceived and treated by the medical profession. These barriers can be even harder to navigate for certain women, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disability and LGBTIQ+ women, particularly trans women.

Research and feedback from community consultation indicates many women do not know where to go to access health services or reliable health information and did not have enough time to attend appointments for health checks.

The mental health of women and girls is also an area of concern. Data shows that women and girls have higher levels of psychological distress than men and boys in the ACT, and there has also been a significant decline in women's wellbeing since the start of COVID-19.² Mental health is also an area of greater concern for LGBTIQ+ women.³ It is important to support all women to understand and seek help in relation to their mental health, by raising awareness early in life of the seriousness and prevalence of mental health issues, working to normalise their existence, and providing support.

 As well as accessible information, it's knowing when and where to seek help and support. 

(YourSay)

A photograph of a woman with curly hair smiling and talking to another woman and a child at a dining table. The image is overlaid with a purple tint. The text is presented in a yellow box with a quote icon at the start and end.

“We need to support... greater flexibility of work hours and days for men. This way there is flexibility across the board so it not something that differentiates women. It is the norm.”

(YourSay survey response)



32%

**young women
aged 18-24**
*do not know how
to access the
health services
they need.⁴*

26%

**young women
aged 18-24**
*cannot easily find
health information in
their language.⁵*



**More than two thirds of ACT women between
18 and 44 years old** *described their state of
health or wellbeing as either 'stressed' or 'burnt
out' over the preceding 12 months.⁶*

A photograph of a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, smiling as she interacts with a young girl. The girl is wearing a tiara and a denim jacket, looking down at something on a table. The image is overlaid with a purple tint and a yellow text box.

Gender bias and gendered discrimination in healthcare results in unequal outcomes for women*. For women* with disabilities, their experience is further compounded by the intersection of gender discrimination and disability discrimination.

(WWDACT submission)

Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
<p>1.1 Investigate options and coordinate development of a guide for women and girls in the ACT on health and wellbeing, informed by the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women and in collaboration with ACT Government directorates and non-government partners.</p> <p>Lead: Community Services Directorate (CSD) (Office for Women)</p>	<p>Increased awareness of influences on health and wellbeing for women and girls and increased access to high-level information and guidance.</p>	<p>Clear understanding of the resource and information needs of women and girls in the ACT.</p> <p>If appropriate, develop guide for women and girls in the ACT on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>If appropriate, metrics and feedback on the quality and effectiveness of the guide.</p>
<p>1.2 Mandate and implement minimum nursing and midwifery to patient ratios in public women, youth and children services across the ACT.</p> <p>Lead: Health Directorate</p>	<p>A higher quality of care, and a safer work environment for nurses and midwives.</p>	<p>Minimum nursing and midwifery ratios agreed.</p> <p>Minimum ratios implemented in women, youth and children services in acute hospital settings.</p> <p>Minimum ratios implemented in women, youth and children services across the ACT.</p>
<p>1.3 Implement the next steps of the ACT Government Response to the Legislative Assembly motion on Assisted Reproductive Technology, including developing a regulatory framework.</p> <p>Lead: Health Directorate</p>	<p>The new regulatory framework will maintain high quality Assisted Reproductive Technology services for women and people with uteruses in the ACT by enshrining in law clinical and ethical requirements for ART providers.</p>	<p><i>The Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill 2023 is passed by the Legislative Assembly and a regulatory framework for ART in the ACT is introduced.</i></p>

Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
1.4 Commence implementation of <i>Maternity in Focus: First Action Plan 2022-2025</i>. Lead: Health Directorate	Better public maternity services delivered to support women and babies.	Actions in the <i>Maternity in Focus: First Action Plan</i> are commenced.
1.5 Support the mental health and wellbeing of women and girls in the ACT through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and commenced implementation of the Mental Health Workforce Strategy's Action Plan • Completion of the new eating disorders residential centre in 2024, and • Implementing improvements to perinatal mental health screening. Lead: Health (Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division)	Support for women and girls' mental health through the ongoing development of a highly skilled, diverse, well-distributed and sustainable mental health workforce. Improved and expanded services for women and girls with eating disorders. Improved access to mental health services and supports for women during the perinatal period.	Ongoing reporting on the Mental Health Workforce Strategy's Action Plan is conducted. The new eating disorders residential centre is constructed. Improved perinatal mental health screening rates.

“The disparity between young women’s and young men’s mental health and wellbeing outcomes begins around the onset of puberty. Research shows gender inequity and discrimination is a key contributor to this gap.”

(Orygen submission)

Theme Two: Safety and Inclusion

Women and girls can participate and contribute to the community when they feel safe at home, in the workplace and in public spaces.

Domestic and family violence is a highly gendered crime, with women representing the vast majority of people experiencing violence.⁷ Research suggests that certain people are more likely to experience gender-based violence including people who are homeless, have disability, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, or have intersex variations.⁸ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are three and a half times more likely to be a victim of sexual assault than non-Indigenous peoples but often do not feel safe accessing services that are currently available, and young people are also at significantly higher risk.⁹

When public spaces are designed according to the inclusive values of the community, they bring people together irrespective of gender. Communities also exist to support sporting and social activities: fewer barriers to participation means more people share in the benefits and strengthen the sense of community.

Inclusion also reflects representation. Governments around Australia and across the world are increasingly considering the role of public art and statues in representing the stories and experiences of the breadth of their communities. Equality of representation ensures that the diversity of the community is visible and valued.

“We are aware, from the time we are young, that we are in danger. We learn to walk with our keys ready as a weapon, and our phone out to call, or pretend to call, for help. We aren’t comfortable being alone at night, we get victim blamed if anything goes wrong.”

(YourSay survey response)



“The way people behave in the space and the way the space is used [impact people’s perceptions of safety in it]. For example, Lonsdale St on a Wednesday morning is fine, but Lonsdale St on Saturday night is full of belligerent drunk people. The rebranding of Haig Park has been a great example of how the reputation of a space can be changed.”

(YourSay survey respons)

90% or 307 victims

Most victims of sexual assault in the ACT in 2021 were female.¹⁰



most knew the
offender



of the incidents were
FDV related



reported the incident to
police a year or more
after it occurred

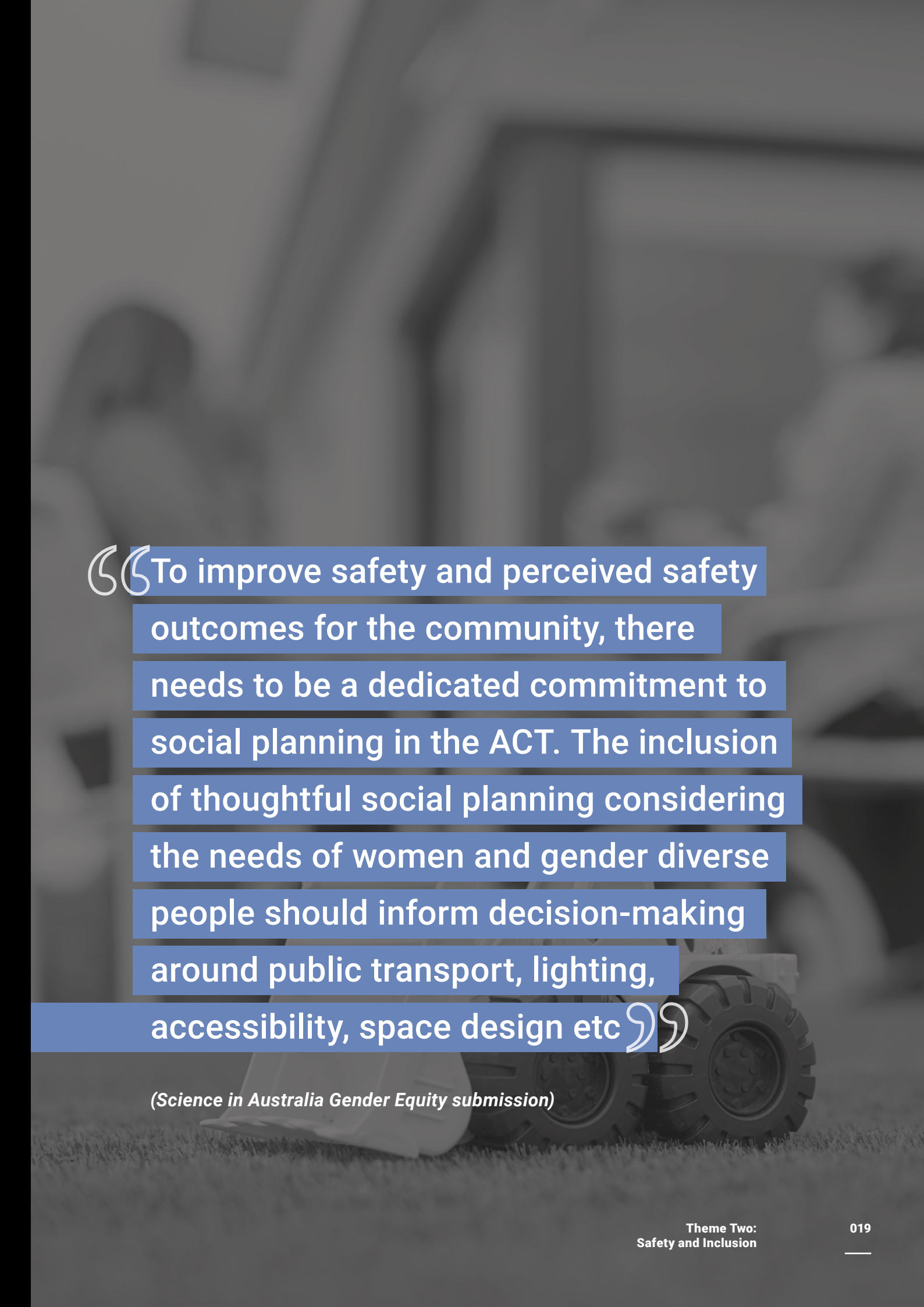
Across Australia, 2.2 million women (23%) and 718,000 men (8.0%) aged 18 years and over have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, including childhood sexual abuse and/or sexual assault since the age of 15.¹¹

The number of victims
of sexual assault in
the Australian Capital
Territory **increased by
18% from 2020 to 2021**,
compared to the national
average (13% increase).¹²



Most sexual assaults
recorded in 2021
occurred at a
residential location
(64% or 219 victims)
and did not involve the
use of a weapon.¹³





“To improve safety and perceived safety outcomes for the community, there needs to be a dedicated commitment to social planning in the ACT. The inclusion of thoughtful social planning considering the needs of women and gender diverse people should inform decision-making around public transport, lighting, accessibility, space design etc”

(Science in Australia Gender Equity submission)

Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
<p>2.1 Implement the Gender Equality in Schools Initiative in ACT Public schools which will support whole-of-school approaches to respectful relationships education through professional learning, resources, support and advice.</p> <p>Lead: Education Directorate</p>	<p>Children and young people better understand the importance of respectful relationships, gender equality and challenging gender stereotypes.</p>	<p>Metrics from the Gender Equality in Schools Strategy.</p>
<p>2.2 Establish a training program to assist educators to use the Early Years Learning Framework as a tool to focus on respectful relationships and gender diversity.</p> <p>Lead: Education Directorate</p>	<p>Educators better understand respectful relationships and gender diversity and are confident to use the Early Years Learning Framework to promote respectful relationships, equity, gender diversity and inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care services.</p>	<p>Metrics from <i>Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT</i>.</p>
<p>2.3 Develop a plan to guide actions to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence in the ACT.</p> <p>Lead: CSD (Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office)</p>	<p>Improved community attitudes that support gender equity and respectful relationships and, in the longer-term, reduced incidence of gender-based violence.</p>	<p>Develop a domestic, family and sexual violence prevention plan.</p>
<p>2.4 Implement the Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF) in specialist domestic and family violence and mainstream services.</p> <p>Lead: CSD (Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office)</p>	<p>People impacted by violence receive consistent and appropriate support from mainstream and specialist services in the ACT.</p>	<p>Develop and deliver training to specialist and mainstream services on the RAMF.</p> <p>Develop guides and resources for specialist and mainstream services to support implementation of the RAMF.</p>
<p>2.5 Continue to address recommendations from the <i>We Don't Shoot Our Wounded</i> report in partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</p> <p>Lead: CSD (Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office)</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including women and girls, feel safe accessing domestic, family and sexual violence services that meet their needs.</p>	<p>DFSV Office to identify priority actions over the next 3 years.</p>

Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
<p>2.6 Place an obligation on organisations to prevent discrimination or sexual harassment through implementing reforms to the <i>Discrimination Act 1991</i>.</p> <p>Lead: Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) & Human Rights Commission</p>	<p>Improved safety and opportunities for women in workplaces and other settings.</p>	<p>Legislation passed, entered into effect.</p> <p>Implementation by Human Rights Commission and JACS.</p>
<p>2.7 Improve representation of women with diverse backgrounds within the governance target of 40 per cent representation of women on boards receiving funding through the Sport and Recreation Investment Scheme.</p> <p>Lead: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) (Sport and Recreation)</p>	<p>Better representation within leadership of sporting organisations to understand, support and reflect the diversity of needs of female participants.</p>	<p>Improved representation with the Board profiles of funded sporting organisations.</p>
<p>2.8 Improve access and suitability of amenities for women and girls at ACT Government sportsgrounds.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Sport and Recreation)</p> <p>Supporting: Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) (Facilities)</p>	<p>Enhanced participation experience for women and girls at sporting facilities – ideally leading to sustained participation.</p>	<p>Percentage of sportsground amenities that meet the established Female Friendly Guidelines for local facility amenities.</p>
<p>2.9 Increase the representation of women, girls and non-binary people, and works by women and non-binary artists, in public art across Canberra.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (artsACT)</p>	<p>Women and girls can see representation of women, girls and non-binary people in public art works across the ACT, and public art works by women and non-binary artists.</p>	<p>Increased number of new works representing women, girls and non-binary people, and new work by women and non-binary artists, in the ACT Public Art Collection.</p>
<p>2.10 Commence piloting and implementation of ACT Government Gender Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines.</p> <p>Lead: TCCS/Major Projects Canberra (MPC)</p>	<p>Increased participation of women and girls in public spaces.</p>	<p>Gender sensitive design principles inform future urban infrastructure delivery.</p>

Theme Three: Leadership and Workforce Participation

Greater participation of women in the workforce and in leadership positions means a stronger economy for everyone. Gender equity in the workplace can reduce discrimination, protect women's rights and improve representation in male dominated areas and leadership positions.


Women continue to be paid less and are under-represented in business ownership and in traditionally male dominated areas. In Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) qualified occupations, for example, women represent 15 per cent whereas men represent 85 per cent.¹⁴

Women are over-represented in part-time and casual work and under-represented in full time work. This means women have less secure employment and less savings at retirement compared to men. Access to flexible work supports more equitable sharing of the unpaid workload for everyone.

Women were also significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Women were more likely than men to lose jobs and hours during the lockdowns, and to take on an even larger proportion of unpaid domestic and caring work, in particular if there were children at home.

“The nature of gender stereotypes and gendered approaches to our society means that women are disadvantaged in a range of overlapping ways in the workforce and in leadership roles.”

(Northside Community Service submission)



“Women are still the main primary carers of children and elderly parents, while still trying to earn an income through work.”

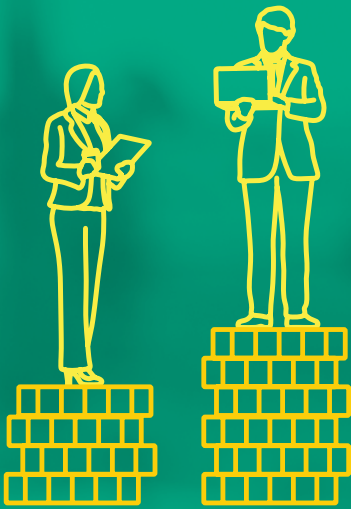
(YourSay survey response)

The Gender Pay Gap for the ACT Labour Force was

10%

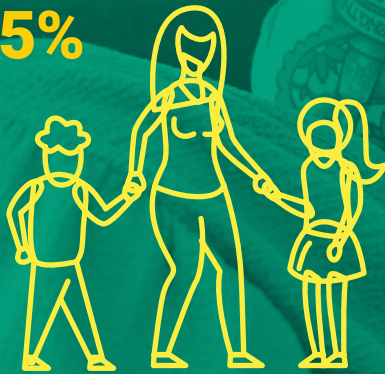
in November 2022, while the National Gender Pay Gap was **13.3%**.

The Gender Pay Gap in the ACT was **6.3% in 2020**.¹⁵



28% vs 15%

Australian women were almost twice as likely as men to have spent 20 or more hours a week on unpaid caring and supervision of children¹⁶



62% vs 55%


Women were more likely than men to have spent

5 or more hours on unpaid indoor housework



72%

of unpaid work in Australia is done by women¹⁷



“To meet the needs of all women, gender equity initiatives must take an intersectional approach. Organisations must engage with people with diverse lived experiences to remove barriers to attraction, retention and progression and to create safe and inclusive workplace environments for all.”

(Science in Australia Gender Equity submission)

Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
<p>3.1 Develop and implement a <i>Women in Construction Procurement Policy</i> to require Territory entities to assess suppliers tendering for high-value construction contracts on their achievement against established targets for participation of women delivering on ACT Government construction contracts.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Procurement ACT)</p>	<p>Improve opportunities for women in non-traditional fields, such as construction.</p>	<p>Develop <i>Women in Construction Procurement Policy</i>.</p> <p>Number of relevant tenderers meeting or demonstrating progress towards the target. Community and Industry consultation will inform the development and implementation of meaningful supporting metrics during the term of this Plan.</p>
<p>3.2 Develop an industry partnership model to run Understanding Building and Construction as a sustainable program in schools.</p> <p>Lead: Education Directorate</p>	<p>Improved opportunities for women in non-traditional fields, such as construction.</p>	<p>Identify industry partners.</p> <p>Develop sustainable model.</p> <p>Promote and embed approach with industry partners.</p>
<p>3.3 Develop and implement an ACTPS Workforce Gender Equity Strategy, which will detail requirements for larger Public Service Entities to have Gender Action Plans.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy)</p>	<p>Improved support and opportunities for women in ACT Government directorates.</p>	<p>Develop ACTPS Workforce Gender Equity Strategy.</p> <p>All ACT Government Directorates develop and implement workforce Gender Action Plans and publish their results.</p>
<p>3.4 Work towards increasing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proportion of women employed in trades in the ACT. • the proportion of women employed in the construction industry in the ACT. • the proportion of female construction-industry related apprentices in the ACT. <p>Lead: MPC</p>	<p>Improved opportunities for women in non-traditional fields, such as construction and trades.</p>	<p>Proportion of women employed in trades.</p> <p>Proportion of women employed in the construction industry.</p> <p>Proportion of female construction industry-related apprentices in the ACT.</p>

Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
<p>3.5 Develop and implement a program to connect and support diversity of employment opportunities across ACTGOV projects through the Construction Employment Hub, or similar.</p> <p>Lead: MPC</p>	<p>Improved opportunities for women in non-traditional fields, such as construction.</p>	<p>Develop a program.</p> <p>Proportion of women that access work through the Construction Hub, or similar.</p>
<p>3.6 Undertake an evaluation of the Strathnairn School project to identify best practice approaches to procuring and managing contracts to support women-led and diverse contracting arrangements.</p> <p>Lead: MPC</p>	<p>In accordance with Action 2.6 of the Second Action Plan, the requirement for female site management and participation has been written into the tender requirements / scope.</p> <p>Provide women with an opportunity to participate in and manage an ACT Government project.</p>	<p>The project will be measured against the requirements of Action 2.6 of the Second Action Plan.</p> <p>This will also be measured against the Territory targets to exceed the current percentage of women above the construction industry levels (greater than 13 per cent).</p>
<p>3.7 Develop and implement an ACT Government approach to encourage women and girls to consider careers in space.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Business and Innovation)</p>	<p>Improve opportunities for women in non-traditional fields.</p>	<p>Consider sponsorship of future conferences focusing on ACT women and diversity.</p> <p>Release an update on the priorities for the ACT space sector and establish a Canberra Space Hub, both of which includes a focus on encouraging women and girls into space roles.</p>
<p>3.8 Provide funding for YWCA's delivery of the Confidence, Care and Clarity Program to support female, female-identifying and non-binary people into employment, training and education.</p> <p>The project is funded through the 2022-23 Adult Community Education JobTrainer grants program, a jointly funded initiative of the ACT and Australian governments.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Skills Canberra)</p>	<p>To provide accessible foundational skills development and enhanced employment, training and education pathways for vulnerable female, female-identifying and non-binary people.</p>	<p>Approximately 60 participants enrol in the program, with the majority of participants completing non-accredited foundational skills training modules.</p>

Theme Four: Housing and Homelessness

Access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing is essential to women and girls' wellbeing and to ensure equality in the community. Women and girls' access to housing can be impacted by gendered violence, economic inequality, caring responsibilities, parenting arrangements, having disability and age. For women leaving prison, housing is critical for post-release support and avoiding recidivism. Access to good quality, affordable housing can help reduce poverty and promote equality of opportunity, inclusion, and mobility.

The central intake and assessment service for human services in the ACT has identified that most new clients are women, with almost half disclosing being impacted by domestic and family violence. ACT-based research indicates the majority of women who stay in their home after domestic violence will lose their home (whether owned or rented) within a year of separation.¹⁸

Across Australia, single, older women are one of the fastest growing cohorts of people facing homelessness. Older women at risk of homelessness have typically had 'conventional' housing biographies and experience homelessness or the risk of homelessness for the first time in later life.¹⁹

There is much work underway on housing and homelessness, both in the ACT and nationally. While this work does not specifically target women and girls and may not be appropriate as discrete actions in the Third Action Plan, the profile of people accessing housing support means that it provides critical support to women and girls.

- The ACT Government has appointed a **Coordinator General for Housing** to oversee the policy framework to deliver more housing in the ACT.
- The ACT Government's **Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program** is delivering an unprecedented investment of more than \$1 billion in the growth, renewal and realignment of public housing over 10 years from 2015 to 2025. It will:
 - add at least 400 more homes to grow the public housing portfolio; and
 - deliver 1,000 homes that are more modern and energy efficient to help improve the quality of life for tenants.

“Most often it is women who are left with little-no income, low superannuation and caring responsibilities during household breakdowns.”

(YourSay survey response)



- ACT Government initiatives to increase access to **affordable housing** include:
 - the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption program that provides land tax exemptions to homeowners who rent their properties at an affordable rate to eligible households via a registered Community Housing Provider;
 - releasing land for build-to-rent developments with minimum requirements for affordable rental dwellings.
- The Commonwealth Government is bringing together state and territory governments, the Australian Local Government Association, investors and representatives from the construction sector under a new **Housing Accord**. The Accord sets an aspirational target of one million new, well-located homes to be delivered over 5 years from mid-2024 as capacity constraints are expected to ease. Under the Accord, the Commonwealth Government will provide \$350 million over 5 years, with ongoing

availability payments over the longer term, to deliver an additional 10,000 affordable dwellings nationally. States and territories will also support up to an additional 10,000 affordable homes, increasing the dwellings that can be delivered under the Accord to 20,000.

- The Commonwealth Government plans to establish a **Housing Australia Future Fund**. It hopes that returns from the Fund will be used to build 30,000 new social and affordable dwellings over 5 years. A minimum of 1,200 dwellings are set to be delivered in the ACT.
- The Commonwealth Government will develop a **National Housing and Homelessness Plan** to set out actions and longer-term housing reforms. The Plan will be developed in close consultation with state and territory governments and other stakeholders.

An average of 63%

of new ACT OneLink clients in April-June 2022 were women.


Among new service users, an average of 27.6% identified that they were experiencing domestic and family violence.²⁰



ACT-based research indicates that the majority of women who stay in their home after domestic violence will lose their home (whether owned or rented) within a year of separation.²¹




Between the 2011 and 2016 censuses there was a 31% rise in homelessness among older women and a 97% increase in the number of older women forced to rent in an increasingly unaffordable private market.²²



“Women take on a heavy caring role and miss out on working time and superannuation. In case of divorce they have no or little to fall back onto leading to homelessness.”

(YourSay survey response)

Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
<p>4.1 Implement measures aimed at increasing the participation on the affordable housing land tax exemption, where privately owned properties are rented at an affordable rate to eligible low-income households, and tenancies are managed through community housing providers.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Affordable Housing Policy Coordination)</p>	<p>More privately owned rental dwellings made available for affordable rental for lower income women.</p>	<p>Increased number of properties are made available to women and non-binary people.</p>
<p>4.2 Support affordable pathways to home ownership for at-risk women by providing seed funding for the Ginninderry Women's Build-to-Rent-to-Buy housing initiative.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Affordable Housing Policy Coordination)</p>	<p>More affordable housing options for vulnerable women, girls and non-binary people.</p>	<p>Community Housing Canberra (CHC), the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) and Ginninderry Joint Venture supported to develop the Ginninderry Women's Build-to-Rent-to-Buy housing initiative.</p>
<p>4.3 Hotel brokerage to provide dedicated support to people escaping domestic and family violence.</p> <p>Lead: CSD (Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office)</p>	<p>Better support for people impacted by domestic and family violence.</p>	<p>Increased number of people escaping domestic and family violence can access alternative accommodation, including through hotel brokerage.</p>
<p>4.4 Monitor the impacts of housing initiatives on the well-being of key target groups, which includes women, and use this to inform policy proposals for consideration.</p> <p>Lead: CMTEDD (Affordable Housing Policy Coordination) in collaboration with CSD</p>	<p>Wellbeing impact and needs analysis that clearly identifies housing initiatives that benefit women, and other key cohort groups.</p>	<p>Housing initiatives that support women to access safe, affordable and secure housing.</p>



“Women are [...], typically, more vulnerable than men when experiencing potential or lived homelessness, in terms of safety. Often women will then remain in unsafe home environments as it is deemed ‘safer’ in their eyes than the potential homelessness or group home situation that is the alternative.”

(YourSay survey response)



Theme Five: Appropriate and Accessible Services

People need to be able to access services to meet their needs. Barriers to services may include the availability of services and appointments, the location or physical access, cultural safety, having time to attend appointments, being a carer, cost and digital literacy.

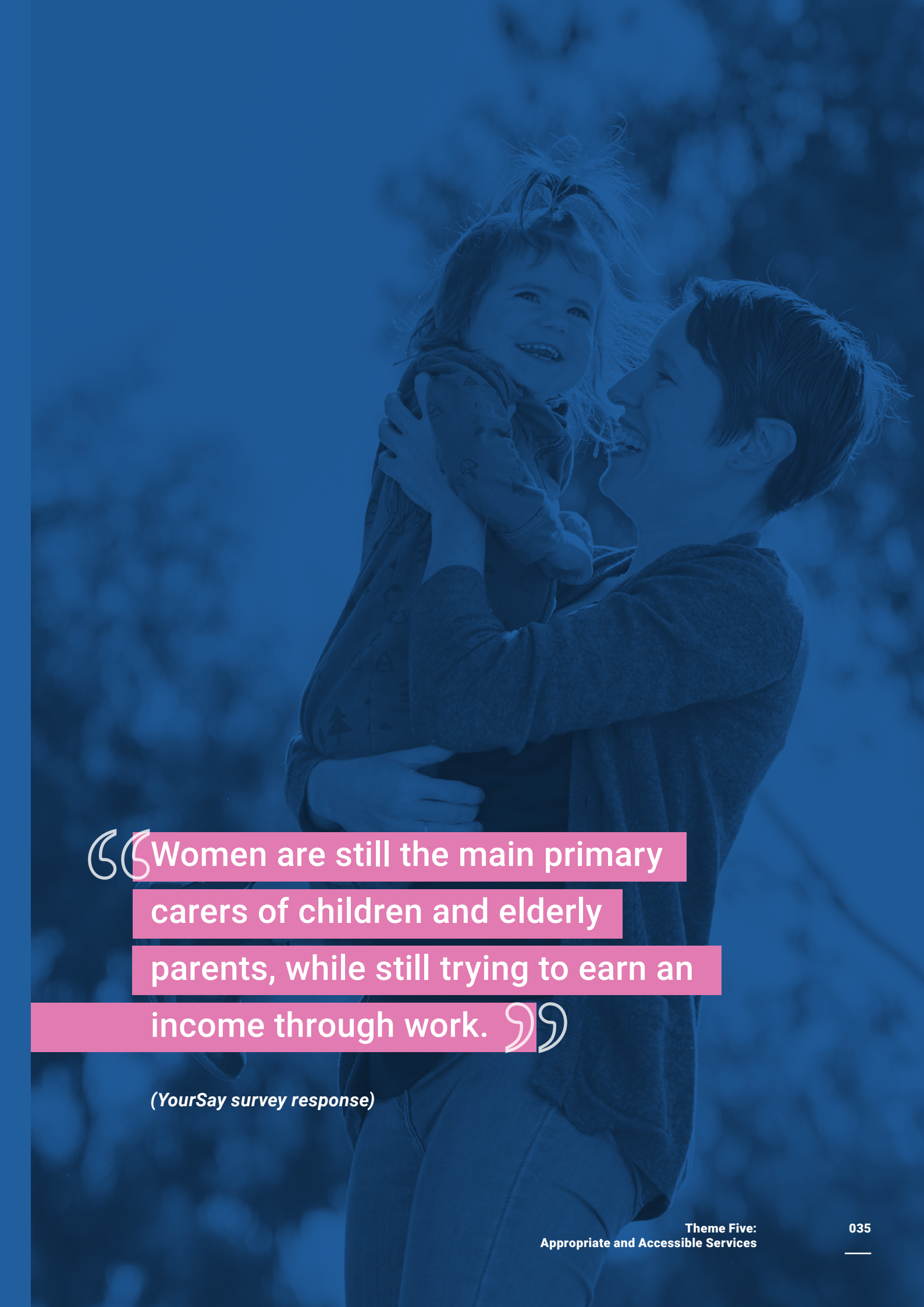
Services need to be appropriate and easy to access for everyone, regardless of their gender, ability, background or life experiences. Service providers need to understand and adapt to the different needs and experiences for people of all genders, including through gender disaggregated data collection.

The community consultation to inform the Third Action Plan indicated that diverse women and girls continue to face unique barriers when accessing services. It can be harder for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, older women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women with disability to access services and support, and it is important for service providers to be mindful of the complexity of some of the barriers faced.

For example, women with disability have distinct experiences arising from the intersection between disability discrimination and gender discrimination. Services need to consider the service need as well as the access needs of its users to be considered effective.

 **Women are already disadvantaged and often home commitments can impact on their ability to access external services - having to stay home to look after children without easy transport can make it challenging for women to access appropriate supports.** 

(YourSay survey response)



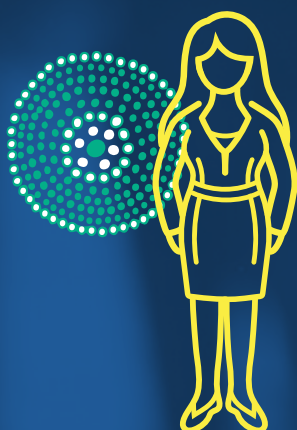
“Women are still the main primary carers of children and elderly parents, while still trying to earn an income through work.”

(YourSay survey response)



In the 2021 Census, 9,000 people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the ACT, making up 2.0% of the ACT population. This was an increase from 6,500 counted in 2016, and lower than the Australian percentage of 3.2% in 2021.

.....



Three out of 5 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women (61%) provided support to someone living outside of their household. Almost two-thirds (61%) of these women lived in a household with dependent children.²³

.....

Women with disability make up only 34% of NDIS participants in the ACT (even though 53% of people with disability in the ACT are women) and have significantly lower labour force participation rates (65.1%) than men with disability (80.1%) in the ACT.²⁴



Actions to achieve this	Outcome	Metrics will include
5.1 Investigate and implement options to increase women's outreach programs through Libraries ACT, targeting vulnerable and at-risk cohorts. Lead: TCCS (Libraries ACT)	At risk women and girls better aware of and access support services in libraries.	Number of participants in the programs, and the number of participants who indicate they learned something new from their participation.
5.2 Trial, refine and embed the Integrated Offender Management program with women in custody in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and supervised in the community, consistent with the Women Offenders Framework. Lead: JACS (ACT Corrective Services)	Women offenders effectively reintegrate into their communities post-release.	Recidivism rates of women in custody in the AMC.
5.3 Implement and embed the Senior Director, Cultural Services role within Corrective Services, noting the currently high rates of Indigenous women in custody. Lead: JACS (ACT Corrective Services)	Improved support for women detainees in the Alexander Maconochie Centre.	Develop and release a Cultural Services Best Practice Model of Care based on best practice from other jurisdictions.

“It is critical that children are seen as individuals in need of specific and contextual support in their own right, not just as an “addition” to the challenges facing the adults in their lives.”

(Northside Community Service submission)

References

1. IPSOS, Global Institute for Women's Leadership et al, 'International Women's Day 2022', March 2022, accessed at www.kcl.ac.uk/giwl/assets/iwd-survey-2022.pdf
2. Centre for Women's Health Research, University of Newcastle, Women's Health Australia and the Australia Longitudinal Study on Women's Health (2021) Australian women's mental health and wellbeing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, accessed at www.alswh.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NMHC-ALSWH-report-August-2021.pdf
3. LGBTIQ+ Health Australia (2021) Snapshot of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Statistics for LGBTIQ+ People, accessed at www.assets.nationbuilder.com/lgbtihealth/pages/549/attachments/original/1648014801/24.10.21_Snapshot_of_MHSP_Statistics_for_LGBTIQ_People_-_Revised.pdf?1648014801
4. Jean Hailes for Women's Health (2022), National Women's Health Survey 2020, p55 accessed at www.jeanhailes.org.au/uploads/Research/2022-Jean-Hailes-Survey-Report.pdf
5. Jean Hailes for Women's Health (2022), National Women's Health Survey 2020, p55 accessed at www.jeanhailes.org.au/uploads/Research/2022-Jean-Hailes-Survey-Report.pdf
6. YWCA (2021) Our Lives – Women in the ACT, p38 accessed at: www.ywca-canberra.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Portrait-of-women-in-canberra-2021-FINAL-Digital.pdf
7. Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee (2021) Listen. Take Action to prevent, believe and heal, p12, accessed at www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1915332/CSD_SAPR_approved_WCAG_plus.pdf
8. AIHW 2019a; Balsam et al. 2005; Cashmore & Shackel 2013; Krnjacki et al. 2016; Mitra-Kahn et al. 2016; Szalacha et al. 2017; VanZile-Tamsen et al. 2005
9. Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee (2021) Listen. Take Action to prevent, believe and heal, p22, accessed at www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1915332/CSD_SAPR_approved_WCAG_plus.pdf
10. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2021) Recorded Crime – Victims, accessed at: www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/2021
11. The prevalence of sexual assault increased between 2012 and 2016 for women but not for men and reports that sexual assault prevalence rates were higher for younger women, women in financial hardship, women living with disability, and women experiencing lower levels of life satisfaction.
12. ABS (2021) Sexual Violence - Victimisation, accessed at: www.abs.gov.au/articles/sexual-violence-victimisation#key-statistics
13. ABS (2021) Recorded Crime – Victims, accessed at: www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/latest-release#australian-capital-territory
14. Cth Department of Industry, Science and Resources (2021) STEM Equity Monitor, accessed at www.industry.gov.au/publications/stem-equity-monitor/workforce-data/stem-qualified-occupations
15. Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022) Gender Pay Gap Data, accessed at: www.wgea.gov.au/publications/australias-gender-pay-gap-statistics#gpg-by-state
16. ABS (2021) Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey, accessed at www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/household-impacts-covid-19-survey/may-2021
17. PricewaterhouseCoopers (2017) Understanding the unpaid economy, p2 accessed at: www.pwc.com.au/australia-in-transition/publications/understanding-the-unpaid-economy-mar17.pdf
18. OneLink (2022) How We Work, accessed at: www.onelink.org.au/images/OneLink_Quarterly_Report_April_-_June_2022.pdf
19. Power, E.R (2020) Older women in the private rental sector: unaffordable, substandard and insecure housing. Western Sydney University, accessed at: [www.doi.org/10.26183/5edf0fd75cf8](https://doi.org/10.26183/5edf0fd75cf8)
20. OneLink OneLink Report June 2022, accessed at: www.onelink.org.au/how-we-work
21. Senate Economic References Committee (2016) 'A husband is not a retirement plan': Achieving economic security for women in retirement, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, accessed at: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Economic_security_for_women_in_retirement/Report
22. National Older Women's Housing and Homelessness Working Group, (2018). Retiring into Poverty – A National Plan for Change: Increasing housing security for older women, Canberra: YWCA Canberra.
23. Australian Human Rights Commission (2020) Wiyi Yani U Thangani – Women's Voices, Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future, p35 accessed at: www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/wiyi-yanis-u-thangani
24. Women's Health Matters, I have to ask to be included..., February 2022 p.18. Available at: www.womenshealthmatters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Womens-Health-Matters-Women-with-disability-health-and-wellbeing-report-February-2022.pdf

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

Special thanks to the members of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women, individuals and ACT community sector organisations that contributed to this Action Plan.



ACT
Government