



QUEENSLAND
WOMEN'S
STRATEGY 2022-27



Queensland
Government

General acknowledgements

The Queensland Government would like to thank and acknowledge the thousands of Queenslanders who took part in the consultation process which was central to developing this document.

We particularly thank the Queensland Women's Strategy Advisory Group, made up of representatives from industry, the community sector and gender equality advocates. Their expertise and advice helped strengthen the strategy.

Young people were also specifically engaged through a youth forum and survey and we thank all the young Queenslanders who participated.

Acknowledgements of First Nations People

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. We acknowledge and thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls who contributed to the development of the Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27.

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:

- ▶ 1800 Respect (www.1800respect.org.au) on 1800 737 732 (24/7 telephone and online crisis support)
- ▶ Lifeline (www.lifeline.org.au) on 13 11 14 (24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention)

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Message from the Premier and Minister for the Olympics

Over the five-year span of the first *Queensland Women's Strategy (2016–21)* we have made significant inroads towards equality.

We established a new Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, paving the way for important reforms – including in relation to the important issue of coercive control. Thanks to our Women on Boards initiative, we reached gender parity on Queensland Government boards in 2019 and have exceeded our female representation target for two years running. In 2021, we appointed Queensland's first Special Commissioner for Equity and Diversity to drive further improvements in equity and diversity across the public sector.

Today, women are serving in some of the State's most influential and public-facing roles – as Queensland Governor, Chief Justice, Attorney-General and Police Commissioner.

While our progress has been encouraging, the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has presented its own challenges. Women have experienced some disproportionate impacts as a result of COVID-19. It has deepened inequality experienced by women already facing marginalisation, with an increase in unpaid care, job insecurity and a rising threat of gender-based violence.

Queensland's recovery from COVID-19 won't just be economic, but also social.

With the Olympic and Paralympic Games coming to Queensland 10 years from now, it's timely that we think about the kind of Queensland we want to present to the world in 2032.

That Queensland should be one in which women and girls have equal rights; where people from all genders and backgrounds can equally access the opportunities that are available in our state. A Queensland where women and girls are recognised for their achievements and are celebrated for what they contribute to our communities. A Queensland where we lift up the voices of our First Nations women and girls, and acknowledge that we need to bring everyone along with us on our journey to gender equality.

After extensive consultation across our State, we are pleased to release the new *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27* – a framework to take us through the next five years, building on our commitments and strengthening the status of women and girls in our society.

We will continue to take action to address economic inequality, with a focus on fairness and inclusion.

We will prioritise safety and wellbeing, ensuring more women can actively participate and prosper.

We will elevate the expertise of First Nations women in decision-making, informed by the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices)* report.

We will amplify the voices of women with disability, and women from diverse cultural, linguistic and LGBTIQ+ backgrounds.

We will celebrate groundbreaking women across communities, bringing their stories out of the shadows to empower and inspire.

We will continue our gender work with young people through our Respectful Relationships Education and our focus on consent and coercive control.

With confidence and a commitment to cultural change, we share this vision for a safer, healthier, and more fulfilled future for Queensland women and girls.

Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MP

Premier of Queensland
Minister for the Olympics

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



The *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27* comes at a moment in Australia that feels like a reckoning. There has been a growing chorus of voices over the past few years demanding safer, more respectful and equitable communities, workplaces and environments for women and girls.

As Queensland's Minister for Women, it's clear to me that we must harness these voices and this momentum and collectively agree that gender inequality is no longer an acceptable, unquestioned part of our community.

This strategy builds on the strong foundations which were established through our first Queensland Women's Strategy launched in 2016. We delivered major reforms and investment in the way systems respond to domestic and family violence; decriminalised termination of pregnancy in Queensland and provided respectful relationships education in state schools. We also exceeded our target of 50 per cent of women on government boards.

The primary focus of the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27* is to strengthen women's economic security. Without access to a stable, sufficient income, women are less safe, and less able to participate and achieve their aspirations.

Economic security is central to achieving every other aspect of gender equality, and a lack of financial independence amplifies every other barrier that prevents women from achieving gender equality. The Queensland Government is committed to playing our part to help women access employment and independence, safe and secure housing, and the conditions they need to succeed.

Also key to this strategy are our commitments to elevating the voices of First Nations and other diverse women and girls, because we know that we must aspire to equality and empowerment for all women.

Women and girls have raised their voices to demand equality and respect and that conversation is not over. We will keep investing and reforming in response to women's voices and continue to strive for gender equality in Queensland. Importantly, government cannot do this work alone. All parts of the community, businesses, organisations and individuals need to work together to implement the commitments in this strategy which will help guide us towards a gender-equal Queensland.

Let's keep making noise.

Hon Shannon Fentiman MP

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

QUEENSLAND WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2022–27

Vision:

Women and girls have equal rights, and equal access to opportunities. Women and girls are safe, valued, and able to freely participate and succeed in the economic, social and cultural opportunities available. Women and girls are recognised and celebrated for their achievements and contributions to the community.

Principles:

- ▶ Equality for all people is a human right.
- ▶ Everyone benefits when social norms such as gender roles and stereotypes are challenged.
- ▶ Equal treatment of all people benefits everyone.
- ▶ Gender equality is inclusive and this strategy recognises all people who identify as women, including those who are transgender, as well as people who are non-binary or gender diverse.
- ▶ Gender equality is everyone's business, and everyone needs to work together to achieve it – governments, organisations and communities.
- ▶ Achieving gender equality requires addressing differing and compounding impacts of discrimination depending on experience and removing barriers preventing women from succeeding and thriving.
- ▶ Elevating First Nations women and girls and their voices is vital to achieving gender equality.
- ▶ An equitable and diverse labour market contributes to the growth and productivity of the Queensland economy.
- ▶ Recognising and celebrating the achievements and contributions of women and girls contributes to breaking down gendered stereotypes.

Together we will create a Queensland where:

- ▶ Women and girls are respected as equal contributors to all parts of Queensland society, including workplaces, schools, homes and communities.
- ▶ Women and girls occupy an equal number of leadership positions in all parts of society including governments and corporations.
- ▶ Women and girls are economically equal and financially secure and share evenly in the benefits available.
- ▶ Women and girls are safe and free from all forms of violence, including in their homes and families.
- ▶ Women and girls are healthy and well and have equal access to healthcare that is tailored to them.
- ▶ First Nations women have the same outcomes as all other women.
- ▶ All women and girls are supported and empowered to have the same opportunities regardless of background, age, culture, or experiences.
- ▶ Business and all industries and sectors benefit from the unique talents, perspectives and contributions women bring.

Impact areas

Throughout this document, impact areas are indicated with colour dots and corresponding symbols.

Primary impact area
Economic Security

Safety and Wellbeing

First Nations women

Women with diverse
backgrounds and
experiences

Empowerment
and recognition



INTRODUCTION

The past five years have seen a chorus of women saying “enough is enough”. Major cultural developments have swept the globe – such as the ‘me too’ movement¹ – signalling a change in the way that the broader community thinks about gender equality. There is a broad recognition that deep cultural, systemic and institutional changes need to occur to address the ongoing economic and social inequalities that face women and girls.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated and highlighted these inequalities. Women have been particularly affected by secondary effects of the pandemic such as increased exposure to domestic and family violence and increased difficulty leaving unsafe homes; increased unpaid domestic and caring responsibilities, including disproportionate responsibility for children at home; disproportionate financial hardship and loss of employment; and employment in industries placing them at higher exposure risk such as health, aged care and cleaning.

Queensland women are not a homogenous group. Women are diverse in their age, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, family structure, socio-economic status, regionality, ability, health status and more. This strategy aims to improve the lives of all women.

The Queensland Government is proud of the work achieved under the *Queensland Women’s Strategy 2016–21*, including key developments such as major reforms to and investment in the way systems respond to domestic and family violence; decriminalisation of termination of pregnancy in Queensland; delivery of respectful relationships education in Queensland state schools; and exceeding the target of 50 per cent of women on government boards.

The Queensland Government is also proud of the leadership shown by Queensland women, particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic: from leadership at a state-wide level, such as the Governor and the former Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young; through to leadership at an individual, local and community level, through the actions taken by so many Queensland women to help keep vulnerable Queenslanders safe from the severe impacts of COVID-19 before we achieved widespread vaccination coverage.

However, it is clear that there is far more work to do to achieve gender equality in Queensland. This new *Queensland Women’s Strategy 2022–27* provides a high-level framework for this work to take place over the next five years, and includes key commitments to drive the work to strengthen the status of women in Queensland. The strategy provides a basis for ensuring that policies and decisions are informed and influenced by women’s voices, both now and into the future.

The strategy is for all Queenslanders – governments, businesses, individuals and communities. Everyone has a part to play in achieving gender equality.

“

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INTRODUCTION

The new strategy steps out five impact areas to focus our work.

● **Our first** and overarching priority is *women's economic security*. Economic security is at the centre of gender equality, underpinning all other elements of gender equality throughout women's lives. We are committed to working together to ensure wherever possible, we avoid recreating inequities of the past and that all Queenslanders are able to thrive from the economic prosperity that we know comes from increased gender equality.

● **Our second** impact area is *women's safety, health and wellbeing*. We know women's safety is an ongoing priority issue of concern to the community and although we have made significant progress over the past five years, there is much more to do to change the story for Queenslanders affected by men's violence against women. There is also work to do to support women's equitable access to health and strengthen broader wellbeing.

● **Our third** impact area is *elevating First Nations women*. We know gender equality will never be achieved unless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's outcomes are improved. They need to be in control of decisions that impact their lives and supported to raise their voices and truth tell about historical inequalities. This impact area focuses on actions to achieve the recommendations of the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) report* by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

● **Our fourth** impact area is *women with diverse backgrounds and experiences*. We know gender inequality impacts different people in different ways at different stages of their life, particularly if they have intersecting diverse experiences such as disability, diverse cultural background, diverse sexuality and gender identity, or experience of poverty. Older women experience not only the impacts of current gender inequalities, but also the cumulative impacts of gender inequality experienced throughout their lives. Women from regional, remote and rural areas also have added complexity and make unique contributions to the Queensland economy and community. There is much to be learned from the experiences of all these groups of women, which will help tailor responses to support them to equitably access opportunities.

● **Our fifth** impact area is *empowerment and recognition*. We are committed to supporting and empowering women into leadership roles in every aspect of life. We must recognise, celebrate and inspire women, so that their successes are visible and normalised right across the community. We will also work to ensure women's voices are heard at every table, to influence the big decisions that affect everyone.

Gender equality benefits everyone. All decision and policy makers have a responsibility to not only create greater opportunities for women and girls, but to take innovative and bold approaches that disrupt the entrenched systems that drive gender inequality.

In order to achieve gender equality, we recognise that we need to strengthen the status of women and girls in all facets of society – that is, achieving gender equity. However, we recognise that gender *equality* cannot be achieved unless all parts of the community work together – including men and boys. The next five years will include efforts to further bring men and boys into the discussions on gender equality, because gender equality benefits all of us. We must work to eliminate patriarchal systems, male-dominated cultures and depictions of masculinity that have a negative impact on all Queenslanders. This includes impacts on men and boys who are vulnerable to poorer mental health, pressure to fit in to restrictive gender roles and suffer from a lack of flexibility for men at work. The whole community needs to work together to change cultural norms and achieve gender equality.

WHAT HAS INFORMED THIS STRATEGY

To help us hear the voices of Queensland women and girls and the broader Queensland community, we undertook extensive community consultation from August to October 2021 as we developed the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27*.

We heard from:

- ▶ Almost 1,500 people through a public survey on the Get Involved website,
- ▶ 110 young people through our Youth e-Hub website,
- ▶ 142 people who sent us consultation postcards, and
- ▶ 99 written submissions from stakeholders, organisations and individuals.

We held meetings and forums with key stakeholders, including a youth forum and a dedicated consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from across Queensland, and also established the Queensland Women's Strategy Advisory Group, to provide us with expert advice.

Two major themes arose across these consultations, that the community felt needed to be addressed as a priority. The first of these was men's violence against women and girls – including domestic and family violence, sexual violence and sexual abuse. The second was women's economic security and financial independence, and in particular the gender pay gap and housing affordability and homelessness.

Further information about the public consultation process and findings is available in the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27* Consultation Report, which is available at www.qld.gov.au/womensstrategy

In addition to the public consultation, we undertook a detailed scan of the current literature, including what other Australian and international jurisdictions are doing to address gender inequality; what the academic research and evidence says about best practice; and what the new and emerging themes and approaches are to raising the status of women and girls and achieving gender equality.

In particular, we recognise the leadership of the Australian Human Rights Commission's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Ms June Oscar AO and her report *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices)* which has strongly informed the development of this strategy, and in particular the section focused on First Nations women.

Other key parts of the policy framework that intersect with and have informed this strategy include:

In Queensland

- ▶ The Queensland Government's work to address violence against women, through
 - *Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–26*;
 - *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence*; and
 - the work of the Queensland Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce which is currently underway and under consideration;
- ▶ The *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027* and the *Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021–25*;
- ▶ *My Health, Queensland future: Advancing health 2026*;
- ▶ *Multicultural Action Plan 2019–20 to 2021–22*;
- ▶ *Engaging Queenslanders in science strategy 2021–24*
- ▶ *Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government*
- ▶ Work underway through Path to Treaty and Local Thriving Communities
- ▶ *Working Together, Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019–23*
- ▶ *Supporting Families, Changing Futures 2019–23*
- ▶ *Our Way: a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037*

Nationally

- ▶ The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2011–2022* and the next *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–32*, which is currently under development.
- ▶ The Australian Human Rights Commission Sex Discrimination Commissioner's report, *Respect @ Work: Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces*.
- ▶ The Australian Human Rights Commission Sex Discrimination Commissioner's report, *Set the Standard – Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces*
- ▶ *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023*
- ▶ *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 and its Targeted Action Plans*
- ▶ *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*



ECONOMIC SECURITY

Our overarching priority is genuine economic inclusion and successful economic participation for women and girls. Economic security is defined as access to a stable income, affordable shelter and income for food and basic living expenses. It also means opening access to opportunities to achieve higher levels of security and wellbeing through education, training, and employment.

Real and enduring action must be taken to address the economic inequality many women continue to experience. Economic opportunities must be equally available to women and girls, with a particular focus on equitable access to opportunities for cohorts of women who have experienced disadvantage or marginalisation, such as First Nations women. Our state's economic success depends on the benefits brought from women's full participation and inclusion. Modelling by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland suggests that closing the participation gap between genders would equate to an additional 6.8% in gross state product.²

Economic security is the cornerstone of achieving gender equality, because a lack of economic security amplifies every other barrier that prevents women from achieving equality. At its most basic level, it ensures access to a stable income, financial independence and workforce participation which are vital protective and enabling factors that contribute to safety and empowerment, secure housing, and access to better health, education and training outcomes.

Despite long-term structural change to increase women's participation in the workforce and increase gender equality in caring and other domestic responsibilities, we know there is still a long way to go. Women comprise 48% of employed persons in Queensland, with just over half of these women working full time and just under half working part-time. The gender pay gap remains at 15.8%³. Women's work continues to be undervalued and occupations that attract lower wages are often dominated by women. Addressing the gender pay gap requires both supporting more women into higher paid, male dominated industries, placing greater value on industries where women are concentrated. Women have less superannuation than men in every age group and 36% of women of working age with disability have no superannuation balance at all⁴. This is of particular concern for women in workforces more likely to leave them vulnerable in retirement such as women in casual work, and women working for small family-run businesses, including farms. Even in industries where women are overrepresented, women earn less than men.

Australia remains at number 1 in the World Economic Forum's international rankings on gender equality⁵ for women's educational attainment but has dropped to 70th for economic participation and opportunity, and has dropped from 15th overall in 2006 to 50th in 2021 on the global gender gap index.

In our consultation survey we asked respondents to identify three key concepts that would contribute to improving gender equality and diversity in the workforce. Respondents identified issues like flexible work arrangements and hours of work for men and women; workforce culture; accessible and affordable childcare; leadership opportunities; and more generous paid parental leave. Addressing these issues must be a concerted effort between governments and employers, and everyone has a part to play in changing workplace cultures and actively promoting the flexible work arrangements that break down traditional gender roles.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on women's economic security in a number of ways although Queensland women are now in employment in higher numbers than prior to the pandemic. Research⁶ suggests that women lost their jobs in greater numbers during the pandemic due to a range of factors including that women are over-represented as casual employees, as well as being over-represented in industries significantly impacted by COVID-19, such as retail, accommodation and hospitality. The proportion of women aged 18-54 years who had their working hours reduced was 29%, compared with 19% for men. However, the proportion of Queensland women receiving JobKeeper⁷ in the last three months of 2020 was just 8%, compared with 25% for men. This suggests that women

were more likely to experience job loss or leave the workforce altogether compared with men, who were more likely to access JobKeeper supports and return to their workplace following the end of restrictions.

The same national and Queensland research found that women's unpaid workload increased during the pandemic, on top of the pre-pandemic statistics showing women already took on the majority of housework and caring responsibilities. As one report said, "More unpaid work means less time for employment and education. Many women reduced their paid hours, left the workforce altogether, or stopped studying"⁸. Underemployment for women persists, with 8.5% of women in the workforce seeking increased hours of work, compared with 6.9% of men⁹.

Many of these structural changes require action and leadership at the federal level – such as access to affordable childcare; addressing the superannuation pay gap; a liveable level of income support payment, and improvements to paid parental leave. The Queensland Government is committed to continuing to advocate for changes at a federal level while working to address the issues under the control of the Queensland Government. Many other changes are also dependent on engagement from businesses, local governments and communities. While systemic and structural issues impacting gender equality will take time to address, the Queensland Government aims to improve the lives of women and girls by delivering and supporting a range of initiatives to enable women to fully and equally participate in society, including in safe and meaningful work.

Ten things workplace leaders can do for gender equality¹⁰

- 1.** Understand economic benefits that come from diversity in decision-making, and make this part of the bottom line strategy;
- 2.** Recognise the gender pay gap and conduct regular audits of workplaces to assess women's roles, seniority and pay parity;
- 3.** Set targets and timeframes to achieve diversity, and ensure this diversity is then genuinely integrated into the workplace or organisation;
- 4.** Understand that change must come from the top, and make gender equality part of core business;
- 5.** Seek out women for development and promotion to counter the societal conditioning that women should be in 'second place';
- 6.** Introduce and promote uptake of flexible workplace policies such as paid parental leave for everyone, including men;
- 7.** Call out and act against sex discrimination, sexist language, sexual harassment and sexist workplace norms, without causing further harm to women;
- 8.** Prioritise diversity competency in staff, promote those who support diversity goals, share their objectives and ideals, and bring in expertise from outside when needed;
- 9.** Make change happen by making it central to business plans, key performance indicators and company strategies; and
- 10.** Regularly audit progress and be publicly transparent about performance over time.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Since 2015, the Queensland Government has implemented significant reforms to prevent and strengthen the response to women who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV).

This included the implementation of 140 recommendations from the *Not Now, Not Ever* report, either full or commenced implementation of more than 50 recommendations from the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, relevant recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and many other initiatives that reflected feedback and advocacy from victims, survivors and the community services sector.

We have developed and continue to implement plans such as the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–26* and *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland’s Framework to address Sexual Violence*, and we are engaging with processes such as the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

As a result of this work, there have been major changes to the way the Queensland service system responds to DFSV, through an investment of over \$600 million in DFSV initiatives since 2015 such as:

- ▶ Establishing permanent specialist DFV courts in Southport, Beenleigh and Townsville, with a specialist magistrate also circuiting Mount Isa and Palm Island.
- ▶ Rolling out eight Integrated Service Response locations, in Logan, Mount Isa, Cherbourg, Ipswich, Cairns, Brisbane, Caboolture and Mackay. A core component of these locations includes the High Risk Teams, which are made up of key agencies that play a role in keeping victims safe and perpetrators accountable, like police, housing, child safety and corrections.
- ▶ Establishing seven new shelters for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.
- ▶ Increased investment in core funding of DFSV services.

One further step taken in early 2021 was the establishment of the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce, which was tasked with looking in detail at how to address coercive control in Queensland, and investigating the experiences of women and girls in the criminal justice system. The Taskforce’s reports will have long-term impacts on the Queensland Government’s work in this area.

However, despite these reforms, the most common theme we heard in our public consultations is that more is needed to prevent and address violence against women. In particular there is more work to be done to ensure that women who are additionally vulnerable to violence, such as women with disability and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, are able to live safe and secure lives. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted further that ‘home’, thought of as safe from the pandemic, is not always safe for women and children.

Gendered violence takes many forms and is driven by gender inequality. Our responses need to be wide-ranging, and address all of the behaviours and attitudes that impact on the safety of women and girls. Consent and sexual education and challenging gendered stereotypes were identified as key concerns for young Queenslanders, confirming that cultural change is vital to preventing violence in all forms. Men and boys also have an important role to play in ending gendered violence.

Community connection plays a substantial role in women’s wellbeing. Reducing social isolation and ensuring connectivity and support for women is fundamental to strong and thriving families and communities.

Neighbourhood and community centres have a proud history and role in creating thriving, connected and resilient Queensland communities. They provide place-based responses, deliver social infrastructure, create a sense of belonging and mobilise volunteers to support their local communities. Neighbourhood and Community Centres have been particularly responsive to the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable Queenslanders, including those who experience poor mental health, domestic and family violence — and those who are homeless or require emergency relief.

Queensland women are among the healthiest in the world, and Queensland's health system is world class. In the last three decades the health of women in Queensland has continued to improve in line with national trends. Successive public health campaigns highlight the importance of getting regular exercise and good nutrition and avoiding nicotine and alcohol. Between 2005 and 2015 women's risk of dying prematurely from heart disease, stroke and other lifestyle-related chronic diseases decreased by 46%, 38% and 27%¹¹ respectively. Medical and technological advances, including the early detection and prevention of breast, cervical and bowel cancers, have contributed significantly to the 5 year increase in women's life expectancy since 1990¹². With a life expectancy of 84.5 years Queensland's women have the tenth highest female life expectancy when compared with 35 member countries of the OECD.^{13 14}

However, we know that women have historically experienced discrimination and a lack of specified support in the health system. These impacts have been exacerbated for women from diverse backgrounds, particularly, women with disability, First Nations women and gender diverse women.

Female-specific health conditions such as endometriosis are only just beginning to be well understood within the community, while the different female presentation of common health conditions like heart disease are also not yet well understood. This has significant impacts on women's health – for example Australian research suggests women are much less likely to undergo treatment for angina or heart attack in hospital compared with men¹⁵. Meanwhile, one in three women has had their health concerns dismissed by doctors, according to the 2021 Australia Talks survey.

We've also heard about the issue of reproductive health and safety as an issue that affects women across Queensland, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. This intersects with other concerns such as family violence and child protection involvement.

We are committing to the development of a Queensland Women's Health Strategy to respond to the specific health needs of women, address the social determinants of women's health and promote women's health and wellbeing. We are also committed to increasing and retaining women's participation in sport and other healthy activities.

We will continue to build on work under Activate! Queensland 2019–29, and we will also maximise opportunities provided by hosting major international sporting events such as the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 and the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to both celebrate the achievement of our women sport stars and to inspire women and girls to be healthy and active.



FIRST NATIONS WOMEN

First Nations women make valuable and unique contributions to Queensland, and have demonstrated strength and resilience through their collective experience of long-term racism, violence and injustice.

They also have unique challenges borne of historical practices and structural and societal barriers that may prevent them from experiencing and realising their inherent strengths. Through our state-wide consultation, we heard strongly that true gender equality in Queensland will not be achieved until we better address equality and justice for First Nations women. We know that self-determination by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and strengthening communities is critical to ensure this.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government have committed to building a reframed relationship that acknowledges and embraces the humanity of Indigenous Australians. This commitment acknowledges that significant harm was done through past acts of dispossession, settlement and discriminatory policies, leaving an enduring legacy of economic and social disadvantage. Significant work is required, in partnership with First Nations communities and peoples, to help correct the damage caused by long-term systemic racism and injustice. But as the *Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government* notes, it is time to nurture hope and optimism, focus on strengths and move from surviving to thriving.

To achieve this, we will closely align our work with the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices)* report produced by the Australian Human Rights Commission's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Commissioner, Ms June Oscar AO. For *Wiyi Yani U Thangani*, released in late 2020, Commissioner Oscar and her team spoke to First Nations women and girls across Australia, including in 15 locations in Queensland with a total of 463 participants. These conversations ground the report in reality for women in every part of Australia and in all the diverse communities of which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are part.

The report highlights the challenges and barriers experienced by First Nations Women and girls and identifies ways to address these barriers, in particular by raising up the voices of First Nations women and girls.

Some of these challenges and barriers include disproportionate experience of violence against women; high rates of interaction with child protection systems; high rates of incarceration; homelessness; substance abuse; poor mental health and suicide; and poor reproductive health. Also problematic is the perception that a 'one size fits all' approach with a focus on welfare and crisis response is the solution to these challenges. We have heard strongly that First Nations women know what the solutions are to address these issues in their own communities, and must be supported to implement these at the grassroots level.

We want to ensure there are social, cultural and economic systems in place that provide First Nations women and girls with opportunities to connect with their culture and pursue their own interests.

As part of our commitments in this strategy, we will develop a Statement of Support for *Wiyi Yani U Thangani*. We have also considered how we can embed the objectives of the report at a state level, for example through establishment of a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's advisory group.

WOMEN WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND EXPERIENCES

Queensland women and girls with diverse backgrounds have the right to be safe and be provided with the same opportunities as everyone else.

Queensland is a large and diverse state. Almost two in five Queenslanders were either born overseas or had at least one parent born overseas¹⁶, 18.3% of Queenslanders live with disability, and in 2016 an estimated 11% of Australians older than 18 identified as LGBTIQ+. The diversity of Queensland's women is a strength that provides the state with a huge range of perspectives and experiences.

The impacts of gender inequality on Queensland women and girls may be deepened by their experiences or backgrounds. Additional discrimination and disadvantages interact with gender inequality to prevent women and girls from reaching their true potential. This is sometimes known as intersectionality or intersectional disadvantage.

There are many diverse groups of women in Queensland, including women with disability, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women who are LGBTIQ+ and non-binary people, women from rural and remote communities, older women, and women from backgrounds of poverty or socio-economic disadvantage.

Structural inequalities, such as a lack of culturally appropriate or inclusive support services, as well as negative social attitudes have marginalised women from these communities. Moving towards gender equality in Queensland will require taking action for *all* women.

The Queensland Government recognises that women with diverse experiences and backgrounds have shown resilience and strength that should be amplified. These communities, as well as many advocates, have built support networks and advocated for societal change that have improved the lives of many women. This includes marriage equality in Australia, improved access and support for women with disability and work to strengthen the understanding of, and response to domestic and family violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We recognise this important work and seek to build on the significant progress made to date. Equality for all women, especially those with diverse experiences and backgrounds, will require a cultural shift that breaks down different systemic and cultural barriers that women experience. Actions taken by government, as well as community and corporate partners, must recognise the diversity of Queensland, and leverage the community's diverse experiences and perspectives.

Through this strategy, we will commit to amplifying the voices of diverse communities, and to advocate for action that delivers a truly accessible and equal Queensland for everyone.

Some of the diverse attributes and characteristics that impact on gender equality for Queensland women:

- ▶ First Nations identity
- ▶ gender
- ▶ sex
- ▶ sexual orientation
- ▶ gender identity
- ▶ ethnicity
- ▶ colour
- ▶ nationality
- ▶ refugee or asylum seeker background
- ▶ migration or visa status
- ▶ language
- ▶ religion
- ▶ ability
- ▶ age
- ▶ mental health
- ▶ socio-economic status
- ▶ housing status
- ▶ geographic location



EMPOWERMENT AND RECOGNITION

The voices and stories of Queensland women are critical in considering how to face the ongoing challenges in our community and how to create change.

The Queensland Government's commitment to women goes beyond keeping them safe and supported. It extends to ensuring women are enabled to participate and succeed in all the opportunities Queensland has to offer.

Powerful and brave women are speaking up and having their voices heard every day on issues like men's violence against women, respect and safety at work, and the need to advance the rights of women and girls. There has been a reckoning in the broader Australian and Queensland communities on the need to listen to survivors of violence in order to make the changes we need to end gender inequality and violence.

There are also many women in government, business and community leadership positions. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in Queensland, women leaders have been a consistent presence reminding the community that there is no job in Queensland that cannot be done by a woman.

However, we know that more broadly, women are still badly under-represented in leadership roles. Despite efforts and commitments from many corporate entities, only one woman was appointed CEO of an ASX 300 company in the 2021 reporting period, while more than one third of ASX companies have no women in executive roles at all¹⁷. More work is also required in all organisations to increase the diversity of women participating and being recognised as leaders at all levels, and to embrace meaningful input by women with a diversity of experiences.

There is also work to be done in elevating women's voices in the media. The Women for Media Report 2021 found that in over 57,000 online articles published by Australian media outlets in May 2021, only 31% of quotes were attributed to women, and that male journalists wrote 65% of articles on politics, 87% of articles on sport and 65% of all opinion pieces.

The Queensland Government is working to improve the public representation of a diverse range of women and girls, for example through our work to increase the number of women depicted in statues and public monuments. Public recognition of women achieving, contributing and succeeding in a variety of ways helps contribute to cultural change.

All policies have gender impacts, even if they are gender-neutral by design. Acknowledging that all policy decisions are linked to the pursuit of gender equality, with the potential to advantage or disadvantage women, the Queensland Government will work to strengthen processes to ensure that women's voices – including those of diverse women – are increasingly at the centre of policy and decision-making processes.

OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitments to achieve economic security

Using government's purchasing power to drive increased gender equality in the private sector, and encourage businesses and community organisations to do the same.	●
Enhancing gender-aware budgeting approaches in the Queensland Government and work to ensure gender impacts are considered in policy and decision-making.	●
Being a model employer and ensuring that Queensland Government leads the way on women's economic security.	●
Through the Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity, applying a comprehensive approach to achieve equity across the public service, improve conditions, job security, and career pathways for women at all levels, in all agencies and across all occupational groups.	●
Maintaining a focus on achieving and preserving pay equity and equal access and uptake of flexible work arrangements, including parental leave.	●
Identifying and supporting a pipeline of talented women and girls into careers in male dominated industries, including trade and technical roles, and invest in the skills that equip women to work and continue to thrive in all sectors.	● ●
Delivering enhanced responses that enable Queensland women to access safe, secure and sustainable housing, paying particular attention to women impacted by violence and older women.	● ● ● ●
Advocating to the federal government to use the levers within their jurisdiction to improve the economic security, safety, empowerment and recognition of women and girls.	● ● ● ● ●
Working together with partners to improve women's financial and legal literacy, capability and confidence across the stages of their lives and across different settings.	● ●
Engaging more girls in STEM subjects and pathways to improve their representation and opportunities in STEM fields.	● ●
Collaborating with stakeholders to address structural barriers that may impede women's success as entrepreneurs, business women and small business owners, with a particular focus on remote, rural and regional women.	● ●
Ensuring all women and girls benefit in a range of ways from the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.	● ● ● ● ●
Exploring ways to work in partnership with employers to increase employment opportunities for diverse women.	● ● ● ●

Colour key

- Economic Security
- Safety and Wellbeing
- First Nations women
- Women with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Empowerment and recognition

OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitments to improve safety, health and wellbeing

Continuing ongoing reforms and implementation of new ideas to strengthen prevention of, and response to, violence against women in all places including workplaces, community, cultural and sporting spaces, to strengthen the whole of community safety net.	● ● ●
Strengthening the health and wellbeing of women and girls, including through a new dedicated Queensland Women's Health Strategy.	● ● ●
Delivering a range of programs that support the sport and active recreation participation of women and girls through the application of equity principles.	● ●
Raising awareness of, prevent and respond to elder abuse and its impacts on older Queensland women.	● ●
Continuing to improve victim safety and perpetrator accountability for families involved in the child protection system.	●
Improving support for pregnant women who may be experiencing high risk and vulnerability, and whose unborn children may be at risk of entering the child safety system.	● ● ●
Strengthening system-wide supports for mothers and expectant mothers who maybe experiencing vulnerability.	● ● ●
Working to strengthen young people's understanding and expectations of respectful relationships through broader community cultural change, including on consent, help-seeking and reporting of sexual assault.	●
Prioritising safe and appropriate health system responses to women who have experienced gendered violence.	●
Focusing on collaboration and consultation between women and clinicians to improve health outcomes for pregnant and parenting women.	●
Continuing to place Neighbourhood and Community Centres at the heart of community reform, and recognise them as vital infrastructure for individual and community wellbeing.	●

Commitments to elevate First Nations women

Taking guidance from the <i>Wiyi Yani U Thangani</i> report and develop a statement of support committing to playing our part in advocating for, and contributing to the achievement of its objectives.	● ● ● ●
Continuing efforts to address the high rates of incarceration and the over-representation of First Nations women in the criminal justice system.	● ● ● ●
Building cultural capacity in government, industry and community through culturally safe, trauma-informed and strengths based practices and policy development.	● ● ●
Working to break down barriers to employment for First Nations women.	● ● ●
Ensuring First Nations women's influence in the provision of maternity services in Queensland.	● ●
Advocate to, and working with the federal government to implement relevant recommendations of <i>Wiyi Yani U Thangani</i> .	● ● ● ●
Working with First Nations women to ensure their voices are heard and acted upon, and their expertise recognised by government in development of policies, programs and initiatives.	● ●

Colour key

- Economic Security
- Safety and Wellbeing
- First Nations women
- Women with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Empowerment and recognition

OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitments to support women with diverse backgrounds and experiences	
Continuing to improve responses to the unique needs of girls and young women in contact with the youth justice system.	● ●
Committing to working with women and girls with disability on the development of policies, programs and initiatives that impact them.	● ●
Recognising the strength and knowledge of women and girls with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and actively utilise this knowledge in design, delivery and implementation of policies, programs and initiatives relevant to them.	● ●
Improving access to equal opportunities for women and girls with diverse backgrounds to include full social and economic inclusion for all Queenslanders.	● ● ●
Re-establishing a high level mechanism to hear directly from the representatives of LGBTIQ+ communities and provide an avenue for input into government policy and decisions impacting them.	● ● ●
Commitments to strengthen empowerment and recognition	
Continuously look for more and better ways to ensure women’s participation and inclusion is built into core business, and positive inclusive cultures are created and preserved.	● ● ● ●
Strengthening processes and institutions to ensure women’s voices are increasingly at the centre of policy development and decision-making processes.	● ● ● ●
Investing in collecting, sharing and learning from data and research and applying resources to remove barriers that impact on women’s participation in workplaces, cultural, sporting and other spaces.	● ● ● ● ●
Encouraging non-government sectors to follow the Queensland Government’s lead by setting targets for women in leadership positions and women on boards.	● ●
Ensuring women and girls’ voices are heard as we prepare for and mitigate against climate change, particularly those most impacted such as women in coastal and island communities, and those working on the land.	● ● ●
Improving diversity of leadership through support, training and pathways for women to achieve in their chosen career.	● ●
Driving change through reporting and monitoring to relevant oversight bodies such as the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.	● ●
Supporting older women to stay connected and contribute to their local communities.	● ● ● ●
Ensuring women’s achievements are recognised and women’s contributions across a range of fields are celebrated, including through award categories which recognise women’s professional and unpaid contributions in organisations and the community	●
Establishing new ways of connecting Queensland women and enabling them to share experiences, learn from each other, and build support for collective action to achieve change.	● ● ●
Ensuring women’s achievements are recognised and women’s contributions across a range of fields are celebrated.	● ● ●

Colour key

- Economic Security
- Safety and Wellbeing
- First Nations women
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- Empowerment and recognition



ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Queensland Government will collaborate with government, community and industry to deliver the commitments made in this strategy. To do so, we will develop annual Queensland Women's Statements that will include:

- ▶ New initiatives of focus in the coming 12 months;
- ▶ Achievements towards the objectives of the strategy over the past 12 months; and
- ▶ Gender equality 'report cards' that will provide a statistical analysis of progress to achieve gender equality across a wide range of measures. These report cards will draw from data sources the Queensland Government Statistician's Office data, ABS data, the Queensland Social Survey, the National Community Attitudes toward violence against women Survey (NCAS), Workplace Gender Equality Agency data, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, contemporary research publications, and reviews and research conducted by partners.

Measuring progress of the strategy in achieving gender equality is complex. While we know there is much that Government can influence in partnership with private sector and community partners, there are also a range of factors impact upon gender issues and the status of women that are outside the control of any government. Addressing gender equality is a whole of community, whole of country, international effort.

To help measure the impact of the strategy and the initiatives outlined in the Annual Women's Statements while also measuring broader community progress towards gender equality, a monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed based on a three-tiered system of measures under a 'spheres of influence' model. These map out:

- ▶ What the Queensland Government can lead on;
- ▶ What the Queensland Government can influence or advocate for; and
- ▶ What relies on community action.

Some examples of potential measures are outlined below:

What the Queensland Government can lead on:

- ▶ Proportion of women in Cabinet;
- ▶ Proportion of women in Parliament;
- ▶ Proportion of women in senior leadership roles in the Queensland public service;
- ▶ Paid parental leave and flexible working arrangements – policy;
- ▶ Funding of services to prevent violence and support victims and survivors;
- ▶ Pay and superannuation equity in the public service; and
- ▶ Uptake of paid parental leave and flexible work in the Queensland public service – both men and women.

What the Queensland Government can influence and advocate for:

- ▶ Universal access to early education and care;
- ▶ Superannuation equity, paid parental leave, flexible working arrangements across all sectors;
- ▶ Women's leadership across all sectors; and
- ▶ Cultural change;

What relies on community action:

- ▶ State-wide, national and international gender pay gap figures; and
- ▶ Attitudes towards women, and cultural change.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Women: When we refer to women, we mean all people who identify as women (including those who are transgender, intersex, gender diverse or gender fluid). We also acknowledge that the experience of people who identify as non-binary and that the impacts of patriarchy and toxic masculinity can have similar impacts on non-binary people as women.

Girls: When we refer to girls, we mean all children and young people who identify as girls, including those who are transgender, gender diverse and gender fluid.

Gender equality: Gender equality exists where there is equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued opportunities, resources and rewards. Where gender inequality exists, it is generally women who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources. Therefore a critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and exercise of autonomy.

Gender equity: Gender equity involves a process of creating fairness for women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies need to be created to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantage, that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality. Equity recognises diversity and the disadvantaged, and seeks to direct resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all.

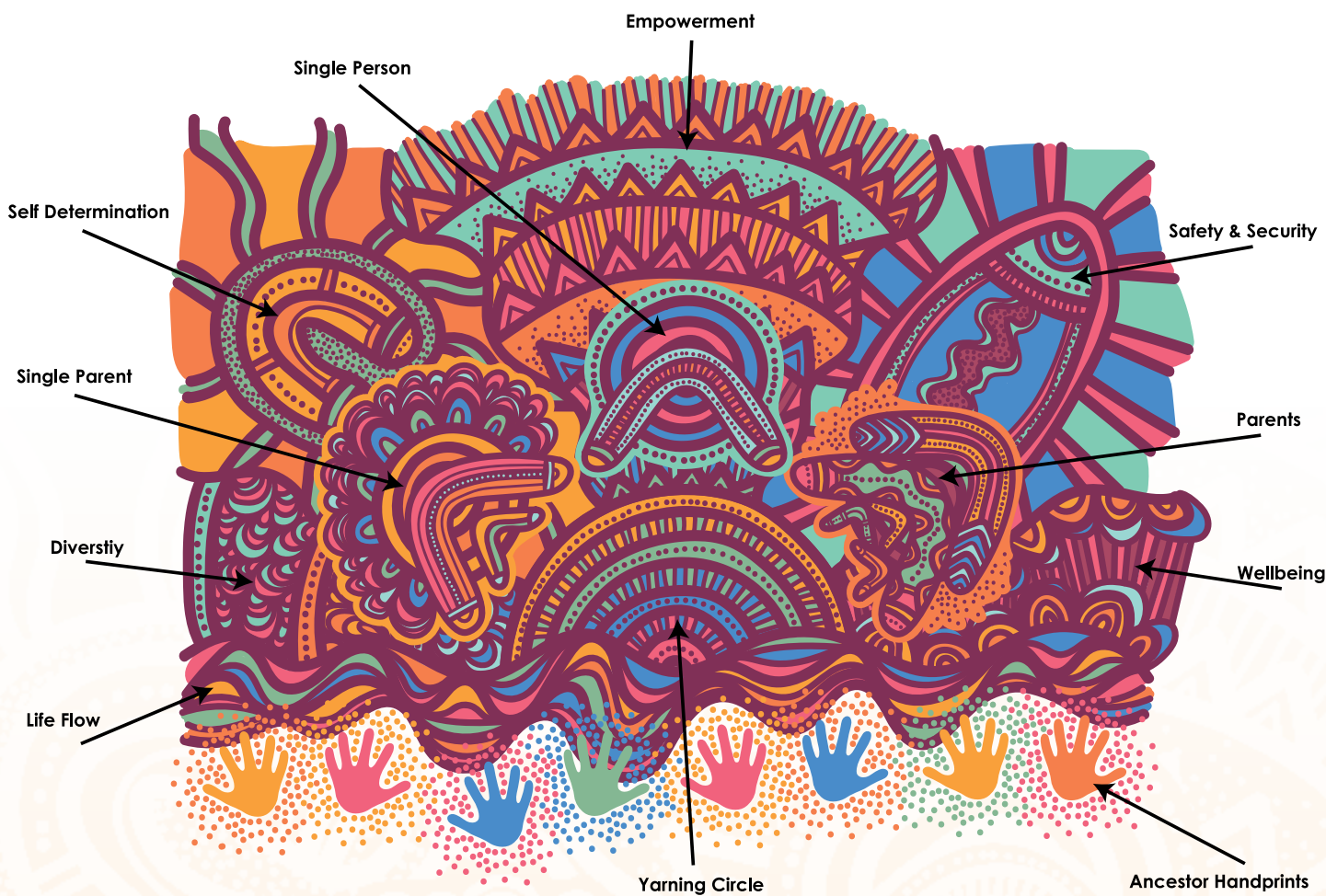
Gender: Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities that are typically associated with being a man, woman, boy or girl. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities.

Sex: Sex refers to the physical and biological characteristics of female, male or intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Sex is typically assigned at birth as being either male or female.

Gender identity: Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth. People may choose to identify outside the gender binary, and often refer to themselves as non-binary, gender diverse or gender fluid.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Queensland Government acknowledges that the ‘me too’ movement was initiated by Tarana Burke as a way to talk about sexual harassment and assault and connect black American women, and later gained traction in countries and communities right across the world, including Australia.
- 2 Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland submission to consultation on the Queensland Womens Strategy
- 3 As at May 2021
- 4 As at 2017/18
- 5 *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*. World Economic Forum. 2021.
- 6 *Women’s work: the impact of the COVID crisis on Australian women*. Grattan Institute. 2021.
- 7 The Australian Government’s JobKeeper program was a wage subsidy program that supported businesses significantly impacted by COVID-19 to continue paying staff wages, including during periods where they were unable to work. It was in place for 12 months to March 2021.
- 8 *Women’s work: the impact of the COVID crisis on Australian women*. Grattan Institute. 2021.
- 9 Australian Bureau of Statistics. Labour Force (December 2021).
- 10 Adapted from *Safe and Strong: Victorian Gender Equality Strategy 2021*.
- 11 *The health of Queenslanders*, Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland 2018, Queensland Health 2018
- 12 Life tables, 2018–2020 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
- 13 *The health of Queenslanders*, Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland 2018, Queensland Health 2018
- 14 Life expectancy at birth - Health status - OECD Data
- 15 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020. Causes of Death, Australia 2019. Vol. 3303.0
- 16 Multicultural Affairs Queensland Diversity Figures Snapshot 2018
- 17 Chief Executive Women Senior Executive Census 2021



About the artist

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 & 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.

About the artwork

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 conversation 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 ones 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 eg. 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 connecting lines, 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 handprints 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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