



Northern Territory Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025

Northern Territory Gender Equality Statement of Commitment

The Northern Territory Government believes that gender equality is fundamental to improving the lives of women and girls, men and boys and gender-diverse people and to creating an inclusive, safe and thriving Northern Territory.

We believe that everyone should have equal access to power, resources, and opportunities. A person's gender should never be a barrier to participation and being included in all aspects of Territory life. We will work to reduce gender-based disadvantages and create greater opportunities for all Territorians to reach their full potential.

While gender inequality affects everyone differently, we acknowledge the disproportionate impact gender inequality has on the lives of women and girls, and that these experiences are underpinned by structural and systemic bias regarding gender stereotypes, and embedded systems of power. Women and girls experience the highest rates of domestic, family and sexual violence, are more likely to earn less in their lifetime, bear the disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and unpaid work in families and are under-represented in decision-making structures.

Increasing gender equality will help make the Northern Territory a welcoming place where all people are treated with dignity, respect and fairness and where all voices are heard. Our approach to achieving gender equality will be grounded in the lived experiences of Territorians. The five key focus

areas contained in this action plan have been developed from extensive consultation undertaken across the Northern Territory with individuals, community and government organisations. These consultations highlighted the importance of community involvement in decision-making and implementation. To develop our initiatives we will continue to seek out, listen to and include the voices of Territorian women and girls, men and boys and gender-diverse people, especially people from marginalised groups who are most at risk of experiencing compounded and multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

The Northern Territory Government recognises that people's identities and backgrounds are diverse with respect to age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, and residential location, among other factors. The Northern Territory Gender Equality Statement of Commitment undertakes to address the barriers to gender equality experienced by Territorians.

Through a sustained and collaborative approach we will create a more equal Northern Territory that acknowledges gender inequality, celebrates gender diversity, and is safe, fair, inclusive and economically secure for all.

Vision

Territorians enjoy an inclusive, healthy, safe, fair and economically secure Northern Territory where gender is never a barrier to full participation and inclusion.

Principles

All actions to achieve this vision are guided by the following principles:

Encouraging inclusive, intersectional and strengths-based approaches.

Gender inequality is experienced differently by different people. Taking an intersectional approach takes into account individual lived experience and the impacts of stigma, discrimination or harm such as racism, homophobia, and transphobia. These factors can compound experiences of gender inequality, as can discrimination experienced based on a person's disability, age, faith, cultural background, socioeconomic status, refugee background and migrant status, or where they live in the Territory. Taking a strengths-based approach and perspective to policy actions takes into account the strengths and resources of people and their environment, as well as people's inherent capacity and resilience.

Supporting the inclusion of gender equity measures.

Gender equity is the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender, and allocates resources and opportunities to ensure equal

outcomes. Using an intersectional approach assists policy makers to understand which communities need gender equity measures, and for what areas of life they need such measures, as well as supporting the community to measure success and identify areas for improvement.

Building evidence to find what works to achieve gender equality in the Northern Territory.

What is measured determines what is visible. What is measured and published matters. Gender and sex-disaggregated data can provide the evidence needed to understand and break down barriers to achieving gender equality and to better understand where to focus government efforts to improve the lives of all Territorians. Evaluation of programs and activities allows increased understanding of what is needed to achieve gender equality.

Challenging rigid gender norms and stereotypes.

Rigid gender roles and stereotypes are recognised as the key drivers of gender-based violence.¹ Harmful gender norms can result in many types of inequalities and pressures on people. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits a person's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional

careers and/or make choices about their lives, solely due to their gender. Challenging these harmful gender norms and supporting actions to change attitudes will contribute to achieving gender equality.

Focusing on long-term systemic, structural, attitudinal and behavioural change.

Most social change is not instantaneous, it can be very slow. The slow pace of reforms to achieve gender equality can be overwhelming, even discouraging. It is important to remember that social change starts small. It becomes impactful as more individuals, groups, and institutions get on board. Systemic and structural change aims to address the underlying conditions that maintain gender inequality. Australia is also signatory to a number of International covenants regarding civil and political rights and that seek to create more equal and fair societies. A determined, steady, consistent, collaborative approach that is inclusive of legislative and policy reforms will be required to drive generational change and increase gender equality over time.

Northern Territory Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025: *Laying the Foundations for a Gender Equal Northern Territory*

The Northern Territory Gender Equality Statement of Commitment and Gender Equality Action Plan 2022 - 2025 has been developed from listening to Northern Territorians during extensive consultations across the Territory that were conducted from 2019 to 2021. The Northern Territory Gender Equality Statement of Commitment was released in 2020 and will be implemented through a series of Gender Equality Action Plans.

This first Gender Equality Action Plan will be implemented from 2022 - 2025 and will lay the foundations for improved gender equality. To address gender equality in the Northern Territory, it is essential to include gender equality measures into government policies, practices and initiatives. The first Gender Equality Action Plan will develop measures, indicators and data sets to provide a baseline to monitor progress towards achieving gender equality in the Northern Territory. It is important that information relevant to the Action Plan is accessible to all Territorians. Where possible, resources and reporting developed under the Action Plan will be made available online and in languages other than English spoken by Territorians.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to increasing gender equality in the Northern Territory, recognising that gender equality has broad social, health, safety and economic benefits. Since 2016, key initiatives progressed by the Northern Territory Government include:

- Amended the *Adoption of Children Act 1994* to enable de facto and same sex couples to adopt children in the Northern Territory.
- Established the *Expungement of Historical Homosexual Offences Records Act 2018* to allow people to apply to have historical convictions for consensual same-sex activity expunged from their criminal records.
- Launched the Northern Territory Health Inclusion Strategy: Respecting People with Diverse Sexualities and Gender Identities- Plan of Actions 2019-2022.
- Launched the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce and Sector Development Plan to upskill the workforce and support people experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Compulsory attendance by Northern Territory Police at unconscious bias training delivered by Anti Discrimination Commission; which considered investigation, racial and gender bias matters.

The Gender Equality Action Plan aligns with and underpins the actions of numerous other Northern Territory Government policy initiatives, these include:

- Northern Territory Social Outcomes Framework
- Aboriginal Justice Agreement
- *Everyone Together* Aboriginal Affairs Strategy
- Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework: *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence*
- Northern Territory Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework
- Northern Territory Seniors Policy
- Multicultural Policy for the Northern Territory.

The Action Plan also aligns with key pieces of work being undertaken at the national level, including the release of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Report – Women’s Voices by the Australian Human Rights Commission’s Australian Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner, the Commonwealth Government’s 2020 Women’s Economic Statement and National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

Monitoring Progress

The Northern Territory Government nominated agency representatives will meet regularly to implement and monitor the progress of initiatives underway under the Action Plan.

Ongoing monitoring through this inter-agency group will help to ensure government actions are informed by subject matter experts,

are place-based, taking into account the unique lived experiences of all Territorians including the perspective of Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal women and girls, and that are gender responsive.

The development of measures, indicators and data sets to provide a baseline for gender equality

in the Northern Territory are essential for ongoing evaluation and will be used to inform the development of annual cross-government progress reports. Evaluation outcomes will be used to inform the development of future action plans.

Gender across the life course

Gender norms and stereotypes affect people differently during each stage of life. The Northern Territory Government will take a whole-of-life approach to understand and address people's diverse experiences of gender-based inequality and harm.

Children

From an early age, children's sense of self-worth and identity is influenced by social constructs of gender. Children become aware of gender stereotypes and are typically conscious of the social relevance of gender before the age of two.² Between the ages of two and three, children begin to self-select activities and toys that society assigns to their gender.³

Young People

Gender inequities experienced during childhood significantly impact young people's ambitions, interests, study choices, lifelong habits, and their self-perceptions of their skills and aptitudes. Gender is a key factor regarding experiences of violence, as one in three Australian women have experienced physical violence after the age of 15.⁴

Adults

Rigid gender norms and expectations as well as caring responsibilities can restrict women from full participation in the workforce. Gender norms can limit the time men feel they can spend outside of work with their families and can limit their opportunities to take up flexible work arrangements or caring responsibilities.

Older People

The cumulative effects of gender inequities experienced throughout the life course affect people in different ways. With almost 50 per cent less in retirement savings, older women are more at risk of financial and housing insecurity, and homelessness than older men.⁵ Men are less likely to seek help for mental health issues and have the highest age-specific suicide death rate in Australia.⁶

Overarching Actions

Limitations in the availability of research, baseline data and understanding about the nature, extent and drivers of gender inequality among various groups is a contributing factor to gender inequality.

This first action plan will focus on increasing and improving the collection and reporting of sex and gender disaggregated data and increasing the Northern Territory's evidence-base in all key focus areas.

A better understanding of the Northern Territory's baseline and community experience of gender inequality, including how Aboriginal people and communities experience gender inequality, will

help frame actions which recognise and leverage off the inherent strengths, capabilities and potential of Territorians to improve outcomes for all communities.

ACTIONS

A Increase the Northern Territory Government's collection and reporting of gender and sex disaggregated data.

- A.1 Working across government, improve the collection, reporting and publishing of data disaggregated by gender, sex, disability, race and age, including from government employment, service delivery, procurement, contracts, crime statistics and government decision making and consultation groups.

B Increase the evidence-base to understand how Territorians experience gender inequality.

- B.1 Partner with Aboriginal communities, researchers and community organisations to better understand gender inequality experienced by Aboriginal women and girls, men and boys, and gender-diverse Aboriginal people.
- B.2 Promote and support programs and research to better understand and address gender inequality experienced by Territorians across the life course and the factors that contribute to and underpin gender inequality.
- B.3 Publish research including an occasional paper series that explores gender inequalities in the Northern Territory.
- B.4 Develop indicators to establish baseline data and to measure improvements to gender equality in the Northern Territory.

C Increase understanding of gender auditing in public policy for the Northern Territory Public Sector.

- C.1 Promote the inclusion of gender in the development and implementation of Northern Territory Government budgets, policies, programs, procurement and reporting.
- C.2 Develop and promote gender impact analysis, gender equality, and gender diversity and inclusion training and resources for the Northern Territory Public Sector.
- C.3 The development of government policy and actions will consider and be informed by the gendered impacts on Territorians, including development and planning for the built environment, climate change and emergency management.

Focus Area 1: Community Engagement

Outcome: Territorians' understanding about gender, gender diversity, the drivers of gendered violence and gender inequality, is improved.

There is a need for greater understanding and education regarding gender, gender inequality and gender diversity, what these are and why they are important concepts to understand.

Through increasing Territorians' understanding of gender and the factors which further gender inequality, actions under this focus area will promote the benefits of gender equality for everyone in the Northern Territory.

Culturally appropriate engagement with Territory communities is essential in recognising the strengths of communities and in developing actions which empower positive change for all Territorians.

What we're doing to support community engagement

The Office of Gender Equity and Diversity continues to provide support for community events that celebrate and raise community awareness about gender equality, gender diversity and gendered violence in the Northern Territory through its community grants program. Key amongst these is the annual support provided for International Women's Day, International Men's Day, 16 Days of Activism Against gender-based violence, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia as well as Pride celebrations across the Northern Territory.

ACTIONS

- 1.1 Increase awareness, inclusion, and understanding of gender, gender diversity and gender equality.**
 - 1.1.1 Promote, provide support to and encourage participation in celebrations, international days, awareness campaigns and gender awareness raising activities.
 - 1.1.2 Develop the Office of Gender Equity and Diversity website to include resources, publications and links that will assist government and community decision makers to increase inclusion and consideration of gender in the development of policy and initiatives and across all areas of life.

1.2 Decrease unconscious bias, gender-based discrimination, and rigid gender roles at an individual, community, institutional and societal level.

- 1.2.1 Promote and support training modules and inclusion programs to increase the consideration of gender in the development of government policies and programs across the Northern Territory Public Service.
- 1.2.2 Promote and support Northern Territory role models, teachers and leaders who actively challenge rigid gender roles, celebrate gender diversity and educate the Territory community about gender equality.
- 1.2.3 Promote and provide support to activities aimed at addressing unconscious bias and gender-based discrimination.
- 1.2.4 Audit and increase the use of gender neutral references in Northern Territory Government documents, including procurement documents, tender specifications, and conditions of contracts.

1.3 Increase the understanding and awareness of Northern Territory obligations and rights under gender related international human rights conventions.

- 1.3.1 Promote and provide information across government and to the public regarding obligations and rights in relation to gender under international covenants on civil and political rights including:
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
 - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
 - Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
 - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Focus Area 2: Health and Wellbeing

Outcome: Territorians are well and live healthy and active lives.

The World Health Organisation recognises sex and gender are powerful social determinants of health and wellbeing.⁷ Gender affects health system responses to individuals, it also affects the ways that people access and understand information about their health and wellbeing, including the prevention and management of chronic disease; experiences of illness; attitudes about preventative health care; patterns of health service use; and perceptions of

quality health care. For example, women's safety and empowerment, education and economic security can have a positive impact on child development and mortality outcomes. Gender inequality results in people having different levels of access to power, resources, services, food and shelter, and increased likelihood of risky behaviours, solely based on their gender. Actively challenging gender norms and stereotypes, along with recognising and

enhancing community strengths and capabilities as social and cultural determinants of health and wellbeing, can improve Territorians' quality of life outcomes.

This Gender Equality Action Plan encourages an approach to the uptake and promotion of healthy and active behaviours and initiatives that respond to gender-based inequities, and promotes community and social connections and mental wellbeing.

What we're doing to support health and wellbeing

In 2019, the Northern Territory Department of Health launched the Northern Territory Health Inclusion Strategy: Respecting people with diverse sexualities and gender identities, plan of action 2019-2022. The Strategy commits the Department of Health to becoming a more inclusive organisation, recognising and respecting diverse sexualities and gender identities among its workforce, stakeholders, partners, clients and patients.

Some key achievements under the Strategy to date include:

- Northern Territory Health Services and sub-contracted service providers upgrading their entrances, flyers, waiting rooms and bathrooms to be more inclusive. For example, the pride rainbow flag and other flags supporting gender identity diverse people are displayed in hospital foyers and other public spaces. Appropriate and respectful information is displayed for consumers in sexual health services, youth services and other specialist services. New facilities such as the Palmerston Regional Hospital and Manunda Place have gender neutral bathrooms, and older infrastructure will be upgraded to meet this standard over time.
- Health information for transgender children and adults is available for consumers in brochures distributed through government and non-government health services and on Northern Territory Government website.
- Development of new patient record coding for Northern Territory Health wide systems to ensure recognition of non-binary identities.
- Establishment of a LGBTQIA+ consumer sub-committee comprising consumers and staff to support sexuality and gender identity diverse consumers navigating and accessing appropriate health services.

ACTIONS

2.1 Increase the number of health and wellbeing policies, programs and partnerships that respond to gender inequities.

- 2.1.1 Promote and support health champions and role models for women and girls, men and boys, and gender-diverse Territorians and develop and promote relevant resources and activities to improve health outcomes for all, including recognising that gender is a key social and cultural determinant of health and wellbeing.
- 2.1.2 Support events and activities that provide opportunities for greater social connection and positive mental health outcomes for women and girls, men and boys, and gender-diverse Territorians.
- 2.1.3 Partner with organisations and communities to develop resources and health information that consider gender and encourage health seeking behaviours including mental health.
- 2.1.4 Promote and support the provision of workplace and education supports that are trauma-informed, culturally appropriate and gender responsive.

2.2 Increase the provision of safe services to gender-diverse people in all parts of the Northern Territory.

- 2.2.1 Promote and support the implementation of gender diversity awareness and inclusion training for the Northern Territory Public Service.
- 2.2.2 Promote and support Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) Rainbow Tick Accreditation for departments in the Northern Territory Public Service.
- 2.2.3 Promote and advocate for the implementation of the Silver Rainbow Program for Northern Territory Aged Care Services.
- 2.2.4 Support events and activities that promote inclusion, opportunities and services for gender-diverse people and communities in the Northern Territory.

2.3 Increase participation of Territorians of all genders in sport and physical activity.

- 2.3.1 Promote activities aimed at increasing inclusion and participation by Territory women, girls and gender-diverse people in sport and physical activity.
- 2.3.2 Promote positive sporting and active lifestyle role models that reflect the diversity of the Northern Territory population.

Focus Area 3: Safety

Outcome: Territorians are safe, respected and are free from violence.

Safety refers to being protected and free from danger, risk or injury. Gender affects people's level and feelings of safety in many different ways. Increasing gender equality is a key component to reducing a person's likelihood of experiencing gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence refers to any harm perpetrated against a person on the basis of gender, which is the socially ascribed differences between men and women. It is used to reinforce conformity to traditional gender roles, and gender-based violence can happen to any person, regardless of their gender identity.

Generally, men and women experience violence differently. However, it is well recognised that domestic, family and sexual violence is gendered violence,⁸ with the majority of victims being women,

girls, and gender-diverse people, and the majority of perpetrators being men. Men and boys are also victims of gender-based violence, however they are more likely to experience violence from men.

The Northern Territory has the highest rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia and it disproportionately impacts Aboriginal women and girls. Some forms of violence are direct, such as emotional, physical, or sexual violence experienced in public, at home and in workplaces, while other forms of violence are structural and indirect, such as norms and attitudes that disadvantage Aboriginal people based on their gender and their race. All forms of sexual violence, including coercion, sexting, sexual harassment and trafficking are forms of gender-based violence. In 2018, the Northern Territory Government

released the ten year Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework: Safe, Respected and Free from Violence, which recognises that gender inequality is the number one driver of the majority of domestic, family and sexual violence. It takes into account intersectional and compounded disadvantage in the Northern Territory community and seeks to increase the involvement of men and boys in domestic, family and sexual violence prevention.

This focus area seeks to enhance the safety of Territorians through supporting the work of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework with a focus on empowering communities through education and awareness raising, and by celebrating community role models.

What we're doing to support safety:

The Northern Territory Government is investing in violence prevention to support localised projects, activities, actions and pilot programs that seek to challenge and change social and cultural attitudes, values and structures that underpin domestic, family and sexual violence.

\$1 million is available annually under the Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Grant Program which represents the largest investment in violence prevention ever in the Territory.

Grants are available to organisations aiming to contribute towards the development and implementation of good practice, evidence-based domestic and family violence prevention and early intervention project activities in the Northern Territory.

Primary prevention projects such as the Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation's 'Mum's Can, Dad's Can' Project have been funded through the grants program. The 'Mum's Can, Dad's Can' project was developed by Town Camp community members in Mparntwe, Alice Springs and aims to stop violence before it starts by helping to identify unhelpful gender stereotypes in parenting roles, and promoting key alternative messages that are culturally appropriate and resonate with the communities they have been developed for and by.

ACTIONS

3.1 Increase activities that challenge rigid gender roles and address the drivers of gender-based violence.

- 3.1.1 Develop resources, promote and provide increased access to education and information available to all Territorians about safe and consensual sexual practices and respectful relationships.
- 3.1.2 Promote positive male role models, positive fathering and grandfathering to celebrate the positive impact that men have on their families and communities.
- 3.1.3 Promote and support international, national and local initiatives that challenge rigid gender roles and the drivers of gender-based violence.
- 3.1.4 Promote and celebrate women's autonomy and independence in public life and in their relationships.

3.2 Increase support for employees experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence and harassment.

- 3.2.1 Develop, promote and provide resources to improve workplace support for people who experience domestic, family, and sexual violence inclusive of sexual harassment.

3.3 Increase responses to gender-based violence experienced by older people in the Northern Territory.

- 3.3.1 Building on the work and research already undertaken, promote and provide support to activities aimed at preventing and addressing gender-based violence experienced by older people in the Northern Territory community.
- 3.3.2 Advocate for the inclusion of gender-based violence experienced by older people into activities and actions aimed at preventing domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory.

Focus Area 4: Economic Security

Outcome: Territorians achieve their full potential and are economically secure.

Gender inequality in the areas of education, employment and economic security can exacerbate inequalities throughout an individual's life. Australia is one of the most occupationally segregated countries in the world.⁹ Female dominated professions such as social work; childcare; healthcare; education; retail trade; and administrative and support services are traditionally lower-paid than male dominated professions such as mining; construction; financial and insurance services; and information media and telecommunications.

Women are also overrepresented in lower paid, part-time or precarious employment and are more likely to work in the informal economy.¹⁰ When unpaid care work is accounted for, the average work day for women in Australia is nearly twice as long as men. According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian women account for 70 per cent of unpaid carers of children and 58 per cent of primary unpaid carers for older people and people with disability or long-term health conditions.

To achieve true gender equality, social norms that ignore and undervalue care and domestic work must change. This unpaid labour – the majority of which is done by women—supports and makes possible all aspects of economic and social life in our society. To achieve true gender equality, workplaces must change to reflect contemporary reality, and be places where all people are empowered and supported to fulfil their caring and work responsibilities.

What we're doing to support economic security

The Office of Gender Equity and Diversity, in partnership with Charles Darwin University provides the Minister for Women's Scholarships which aim to improve Northern Territory women's economic security and general life outcomes. There are five scholarships offered each year and are aimed at Northern Territory women experiencing economic, social, cultural or geographic disadvantage. There are both Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training Scholarships to support women in the Northern Territory to undertake study or training opportunities at Charles Darwin University, including in non-traditional industries for their gender.

In 2021, the recipients included a PhD student focussing on the use of drones to improve healthcare delivery in remote communities, an environmental scientist, a mature-age student undertaking her Certificate IV in Mental Health, a student undertaking a Certificate IV in commercial cookery and a woman working in the construction industry undertaking a Diploma of Project Management.

ACTIONS

4.1 Increase the number of Territorians undertaking non-traditional occupations for their gender.

- 4.1.1 Promote and provide grants, scholarships and incentives and work with the Australian Government to address barriers to increase women and gender-diverse people's workforce participation and economic security across the life course.
- 4.1.2 Strengthen Territorians ability to undertake work in non-traditional occupations for their gender by identifying and addressing systemic barriers and drivers which discourage participation.

4.2 Increase activities that support gender equality in the workplace, and that provide support against bullying and sexual harassment.

- 4.2.1 Develop, promote and support activities and resources for Northern Territory employers and employees to better understand and strengthen gender equality measures in the workplace.
- 4.2.2 Work with organisations, businesses and industries to increase gender equality in workplaces and industries, and promote the provision of workplace supports, processes and policies against bullying and sexual harassment in all workplaces.

4.3 Increase actions that assist Territorians to be financially resilient across the life course.

- 4.3.1 Work with the Australian Government to address structural issues affecting women's economic security that require action at a national level including paid parental leave, superannuation, reducing the gender pay gap, and childcare.
- 4.3.2 Through partnerships with Territory organisations and communities, develop and promote resources and activities aimed at increasing individual and community financial literacy and resilience across the life course.
- 4.3.3 Through community engagement, increase the accessibility of all Territorians to financial benefits and incentive schemes.

4.4 Increase gender equality activities focused on education and workforce participation so that Territorians can maintain sufficient income across the life course.

- 4.4.1 Develop, support and promote programs and activities that assist young parents and carers to continue their education and participate in the workforce.
- 4.4.2 Develop, support and promote programs and activities aimed at increasing financial security and rates of employment for older women.
- 4.4.3 Deliver and promote activities that increase understanding of and responses to the gendered drivers of underemployment and unemployment over the life course.
- 4.4.4 Deliver and promote activities that increase gender equality in business ownership by encouraging Northern Territorian women and gender-diverse people to take up business ownership or develop business opportunities that contribute to the Northern Territory economy.

4.5 Increase initiatives and incentives that promote equal sharing between genders of unpaid work and caring responsibilities.

- 4.5.1 Promote the uptake and benefits of flexible work arrangements, parental leave and carers leave to government, non-government organisations, private enterprise and the public, including promoting government and community leaders as flexible employment role models and empowering employees to request and take flexible work arrangements offered by employers.
- 4.5.2 Promote the importance of, celebrate and seek to increase the supports available to carers in Northern Territory community.

Focus Area 5: Leadership and Participation

Outcome: Territorians fully participate in all aspects of life and influence the decisions that impact them.

Leadership, participation, and representation refer to having one's voice included and considered in decision-making processes. The makeup of decision-making bodies should reflect the people that they make decisions for because these groups decide where resources are allocated, which issues are addressed, and who benefits from the actions taken.

Many actions can be taken at the community level to encourage people to participate in decision-making and leadership positions. This includes recognising and promoting the importance of community role models and leaders and the differences in decision-making processes and models of governance which exist between cultures.

Gender equality in leadership and decision-making is not just about who is represented or leading, it is also about who is listened to by leaders, who is able to contribute or have a voice to influence decision-making. This Gender Equality Action Plan will undertake activities to increase gender equality in decision-making as well as developing resources that develop leadership skills.

What we're doing to support leadership and participation:

Since 2016, the Northern Territory Government has been committed to increasing diversity and achieving gender balance in membership on government boards. The commitment is aimed at ensuring government service provisions reflect the expectations and needs of the community's demographic, including women and gender-diverse people. Community members can register their interest online and are placed on the Expression of Interest Board Register as a resource for Northern Territory Government agencies to consider when selecting suitable qualified individuals.

The initiative has been successful with females making up 45 per cent of board members in 2021; an increase of 23 per cent since reporting commenced in August 2016.

ACTIONS

5.1 Increase gender balance in leadership and decision-making roles in the Northern Territory community.

- 5.1.1 Promote the benefits of and develop resources and accountability mechanisms to increase gender equality in leadership and decision-making.
- 5.1.2 Support and promote gender equality role models, celebrating their achievements, contribution and leadership to the Northern Territory community.
- 5.1.3 Develop and promote web resources to increase girls, women and gender-diverse Territorian's understanding and uptake of leadership, representative and decision-making roles in their communities.
- 5.1.4 Support activities which strengthen the organisational and governance capacity of local decision-making bodies through the promotion of role models and representation in both mainstream and culturally diverse models of leadership.

5.2 Increase gender equality in civic engagement, representation and decision-making bodies.

- 5.2.1 Support activities that strengthen gender balance in civic engagement so that all parts of the community are heard by decision makers.

Glossary of Terms

Economic security: refers to an individual's ability to financially support a good standard of living throughout all stages of life.

Gender: is how society or culture describes and constructs the different roles for women and men. It refers to the tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in public and private life. Gender identity is how people express their masculine and/or feminine characteristics. Gender roles, and opportunities and expectations attached to these roles can, and do, change over time and between different societies and cultures. Gender is not the same as sex, which refers to the biological characteristics of females and males.

Gender audit: a tool that allows organisations to identify and understand gender patterns within their composition, structures, processes, organisational culture and management of human resources, and in the design and delivery of policies and services. Gender audits establish a baseline against which progress can be measured over time.

Gender-based violence: is violence that is directed at an individual based on their biological sex or gender identity. This form of violence can include physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, and economic or educational deprivation and can occur in public, private or work life.

Gender equality: refers to equal chances or opportunities for people of all genders to access and control social, economic and political resources, including protection under the law. Gender equality does not mean that all genders are treated the same.

Gender equity: refers to the allocation of resources, opportunities, programs and decision-making according to the level of gendered disadvantage. As people face different kinds of disadvantage and discrimination, treating everyone as equals does not produce equitable results. 'Gender equity' is a mechanism by which gender equality may be achieved.

Gender-diverse: refers to someone who does not identify as exclusively a man or a woman. Someone who is gender-diverse might feel like a mix of genders, or like they have no gender at all, including people who identify as non-binary.

Gender norms, rigid gender roles or stereotypes: are preconceived notions informed by history and culture of what the characteristics, attitudes, behaviours, roles and occupations of people should be based on their gender. For example, 'women are nurturing' and 'men are strong'.

Gender pay gap: A measurement of the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time equivalent earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

Intersectionality: refers to multiple forms of discrimination leading to compounded disadvantage. Intersectional approaches recognise and respond to multiple and compounded forms of disadvantage and discrimination.

LGBTQIA+: an umbrella term defined by Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) as an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or allies and others on the spectrum of gender.

QIP Rainbow Tick Accreditation: The QIP Rainbow Tick is a national accreditation program which supports organisations to understand and implement LGBTQIA+ safe and inclusive service delivery and provides recognition for those that meet the Rainbow Tick Standards.

Silver Rainbow Program: The Silver Rainbow Program is designed to improve the experiences of LGBTI people as they age and enter the Australian aged care system.

Strengths-based approach: emphasises the positive attributes of individual and communities, for example their resilience, strengths and knowledge rather than focusing on negative events or deficits.

Unconscious bias: People have a natural preference for other people who look like us, sound like us or share our interests. These factors can unconsciously impact decision-making (for example, in the workplace) or the way we treat and interact with others.

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