

August 2019

## YWCA Australia submission to the Northern Territory (NT) Government *Gender Equality Framework*

*"I want to see men in political leadership positions join the campaign to end gender inequality, and for young women like me to believe them when they say they will."*

*"(There is a) real opportunity to create a gender equality framework that has the potential to impact every woman... This framework must recognise the specific challenges that groups of different women face, as well as addressing the shared experiences that women identify as a problem to achieving gender equality in their lives. Moreover, this framework should aim to go beyond meeting the basic human rights of all women but should strive to empower them, which will overall contribute to the growth and development of the region as a whole."*

YWCA Australia's Young Women's Council members reflection on gender equality frameworks

### Introduction

YWCA Australia is a leading national not-for-profit women's organisation working towards a future where all women and girls are safe and respected with equal access to power, opportunity and resources. YWCA Australia is part of World YWCA, a global membership movement of women and young women who have been leading social and economic change in 125 countries, for over 150 years. YWCAs around the world have a strong history of advocating for gender equality in all its forms as part of our commitment to the full realisation of the human rights of women, young women and girls.

YWCA Australia undertakes advocacy and delivers programs and services that develop the leadership and collective power of women, young women and girls; support individuals, their families and communities at critical times; and promotes gender equality to strengthen communities across Australia's diverse social and geographic landscape. YWCA Australia has been providing crucial community services since the 1880s and has been operating in the Northern Territory since 1969. In Darwin, YWCA provides a range of [programs and services](#) including housing and homelessness services, domestic and family violence services, medical accommodation, and the award winning [Women of Worth](#) program for women in the justice system. YWCA Australia in Darwin worked collaboratively with a number of organisations and passionate individuals to advocate for abortion law reform, which were implemented on 1 July 2016.

In the era of the 'MeToo' and 'Times Up' movements, and with the national implementation of federally funded gender equality mechanisms such as the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) and the Fourth National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, it is clear that the drive to address gender inequality is increasing, and that it is everybody's business. Overwhelmingly the evidence proves that gender inequality does not just negatively impact women, young women and girls, but also men, young men boys and gender diverse people.

Despite this, a concerning proportion of people in Australia believe that gender inequality is exaggerated or no longer a problem<sup>1</sup>. Significant structural and cultural shifts, propelled by leaders within and outside of government, are required to see a measurable improvement in the impact of gender inequalities.

### **An intersectional approach**

Gender inequality is not experienced the same way by all women. To achieve equality for everyone, gender inequity cannot be siloed from other forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Integrating intersectional thinking should consider such things as Aboriginality, culture, race, ethnicity, faith, socio-economic status, ability, sexuality, gender identity, education, age, and migration status.<sup>2</sup>

For the purposes of this submission we will use the term intersectionality as an approach to refer to people's experiences of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage. We are encouraged to see a commitment from the NT Government to adopt an intersectional lens in their implementation of a gender equality framework.

An intersectional approach should also be used in applying **best practice language** (for example the NT Government's shift from the name of 'Office of Women's Policy' to 'Office of Gender Equity and Diversity' acknowledges that gender inequality impacts everyone, and that equity and diversity measures are part of the solution), as well as **taking a flexible and tailored approach to implementation**, ensuring that more vulnerable and marginalised groups are reached and supported.

### **YWCA service delivery in the Northern Territory**

In the NT, YWCA programs include youth crisis accommodation, domestic and family violence support, housing support, parenting support, youth restorative justice, women in prison support and Keeping Women Safe in Their Home.

Below are some highlights from our diverse programming in the Northern Territory:

#### **YWCA Domestic and Family Violence Centre**

- Assisted 279 clients
- Provided 6082 nights of accommodation
- Provided \$23,426.22 in Emergency Relief Funding (food vouchers)
- Arranged 1532 referrals to link into other services (with contact recorded)

#### **Housing Support Program**

- Provided 7818 nights of accommodation to young people
- Provided 3589 nights of accommodation to women
- 2186 nights of accommodation to young people through the Youth Housing Options and Pathways Program (YHOPP) in partnership with Anglicare

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<sup>1</sup> 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)

<sup>2</sup> For example there is growing evidence that women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women report experiencing violence at 3.1 times the rate of non-Indigenous women.

### **Parenting Support Program**

- Engaged 55 mothers in the program
- Provided 99 referrals to other support services

### **Women of Worth Program**

An evaluation of the WoW program found that three quarters of clients released from prison continued to live in the community after their release. At that time, only three (4%) clients returned to Darwin Correctional Centre for new charges, and 12 (15%) returned for breach of conditions.

In December 2018, Women of Worth won the prestigious Fitzgerald Justice Award for contributing significantly to the protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights in the area of law and justice.

### **YWCA's engagement with young women**

YWCA Australia engages with women, young women and girls across the country and internationally through our service delivery, public policy engagement with state/territory and federal governments, and advocacy across the women's sector globally. In addition, YWCA Australia has a **Young Women's Council**, which plays an advisory role to the board and the organisation, including on future planning, advocacy, policy, research, communications and stakeholder engagement.

### **YWCA Australia's submission**

We welcome this opportunity to provide a submission to the development of a Gender Equality Framework, and commend the NT Government on their commitment to implementing structural change to comprehensively address gender inequality in the Territory. The NT Government has a unique opportunity to lead Australia's efforts in tackling gender inequalities and showcase on a world stage innovative and ground-breaking initiatives that improve the lives of everyone living in the NT.

In this submission we will provide some high-level recommendations, as well as insights into the four key focus areas based on our unique local community experience, program expertise and gender equality knowledge. This submission is also informed by our consultation and engagement with women, young women and girls, including young women members from the NT and across Australia.

### **Government machinery**

YWCA Australia affirms the need for inclusion of mechanisms and initiatives into a gender equality framework that make tangible and measurable progress on gender inequality. Below we highlight some key opportunities for leadership and best practice in this space. These recommendations are:

- **Gender Equality Action Plans within government**
- **Gender Expert Facilitation and Partnerships with non-government**
- **Reporting and Accountability mechanisms**
- **Tackling policy and legislative change**

## Gender Equality Action Plans within government

It is essential that workforce development be integrated into a gender equality framework, including in all government departments. This could take the form of Gender Equality Action Plans, which will enable workplaces to be supported through change management process and be connected to evidence based resources on gender equality planning and measurement.

This approach aligns with the NT Gender Equality Framework's principle of '*Focusing on long-term strategies to challenge systematic gender inequality*', and best practice models similar to what is being implemented in Victoria. As part of Victoria's *Gender Equality Strategy* and *Gender Equality Bill*<sup>3</sup>, internal gender equality auditing is mandated within all public sector organisations, including public sector entities with over 100 full-time employees, as well as local government. Under this strategy, these organisations are required to report on progress towards achieving targets and against key indicators. YWCA Australia recommends a similar model, ensuring all NT government entities are accountable and invested in the gender equality framework.

## Gender Expert Facilitation and Partnerships with non-government

Importantly, a gender equality framework should include partnerships between government and gender equality specialists including representation from diverse backgrounds. This supports the NT Gender Equality Framework's principles of '*Building the evidence-base*' and '*Sharing responsibility and strengthening community partnerships*.'

It is critical that implementation of a gender equality framework is carried out within best practice and evidence based frameworks and facilitated by experts in gender equality. For example, the NT Government could partner with YWCA Australia as experts in gender equality facilitation and implementation, on initiatives including:

- The [Gender Equity Matters](#) (GEM) program, delivered within government departments as part of a **Gender Equality Action Plan**. The GEM program undertakes a gender audit as an activation point for organisations to advance gender equality and enhance diversity in their workplace.
- YWCA's **evidence-based training** on [Unconscious Gender Bias](#) and [Bystander Intervention](#) into government departments and other organisations.
- Collaboration on implementation of **innovative housing models** that address the driving factors behind women's housing insecurity and homelessness, such as domestic and family violence and economic disadvantage. Examples include YWCA's '[Pathways to Independence](#)' program for women at risk of homelessness, or 'pop up housing' models that provide medium-long term housing security.
- **Primary prevention [respectful relationships programs](#)** within community-based settings given that many vulnerable young people are not engaged in the school system. This would be delivered in partnership with organisations such as YWCA Australia who have expertise in best practice delivery of primary prevention programs.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gender-equality>

- Collaboration with the women’s sector on the rollout of a **campaign to shift social attitudes** to gender equality. The 50/50 by 2030 Report on social attitudes to gender equality highlights a ‘profound knowledge gap’ in understanding of gender inequality in Australia. This highlights the critical role of government and their partnerships with gender experts in filling that gap and bringing about structural as well as cultural change.

## Reporting and Accountability mechanisms

Reporting and accountability mechanisms are essential for measuring and mandating the success of a gender equality framework. The below mechanisms are best practice examples of how effective reporting and accountability can be integrated:

### Outcomes, targets and indicators

A gender equality framework must include ambitious outcomes and targets to enhance and measure progress and impact, while still allowing for a flexible and tailored approach. YWCA Australia advocates for the implementation of affirmative action measures or ‘temporary special measures’<sup>4</sup>, which evidence shows is effective in contributing to achieving gender equality.<sup>5</sup>

For example, a **40:40:20 gender equality quota** for leadership positions within government (such as government boards) provides a clear incentive, while still allowing for flexibility, scalability, and the inclusion of non-binary and gender diverse people. This could be incrementally applied to varying levels of management across government, and provide incentives for non-government organisations and businesses to follow suit.

Effective monitoring and accountability should include **adopting indicators** and evaluation and compliance processes that have a **gendered analysis**. For example, the Victorian Government’s Gender Equality Strategy has set quantifiable and qualitative indicators aligned to each target to measure social and economic outcome.<sup>6</sup>

Another outcomes-based mechanism that embeds shared community responsibility and accountability is the implementation of a **‘community of practice’ planning and evaluation model**. YWCA Australia’s recommends the implementation of something like YWCA’s Young Women’s Council, and the Victorian Government’s **‘citizens’ jury’** where committees made up of diverse community members inform and analyse the implementation and impact of policies with a gender lens.<sup>7</sup> An example of internal application of this could be implementing a gender lens into the NT Government’s Social Policy Scrutiny Committee.

In addition to mandated targets and indicators, organisations and individuals who achieve gender targets should be **rewarded and incentivised**. YWCA New Zealand have created the NZ Equal Pay Awards, finding phenomenal success celebrating leaders in pay parity. YWCA Australia is keen to work

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12099>

<sup>5</sup> [https://sage-pilot.uq.edu.au/files/121/targets\\_and\\_quotas\\_report\\_2012.pdf](https://sage-pilot.uq.edu.au/files/121/targets_and_quotas_report_2012.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality#outcomes-framework>

<sup>7</sup> <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gender-equality>

closely with the NT Government in sharing our expertise in building and implementing gender equality action plans through our Gender Equality Matters (GEM) program.

### **Align to other government outcomes frameworks and commitments**

The *NT Women's Policy Framework 2015-2020* refers to a 'Whole of Government' and 'Whole of Community' approach to advancing gender equality. To this end, a gender equality framework should include mandates and opportunities for collaboration across and within government to increase engagement, accountability and impact.

We commend the NT Government for their recognition of alignment to many other ongoing processes in the consultation document. The focus on sharing responsibility with the inclusion of alignment to other NT Government frameworks as well as national and international commitments including the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW). These joint agreements provide a significant blueprint for a comprehensive and aligned gender equality framework in the NT. We further recommend that this Gender Equality Framework will align to the NT's 'Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework' which is also currently undergoing a community consultation process, particularly overlapping on the key issue of women's safety.

### **Gender Responsive Budgeting**

YWCA Australia recommends the NT Government **reinstate the 'Women in the Budget'** Statements (discontinued in 2002) as part of government-wide 'Gender Responsive Budgeting' (GRB). GRB is an effective form of policy analysis that assesses the budget in terms of its gendered reach and impact.

An effective GRB process in government would:

- sit at a range of points across the policy and budget development cycle, rather than at a single point in the process;
- identify gender biases and improve awareness of gender among policy and decision makers;
- identify the resources needed to achieve equality;
- increase transparency and accountability on gender issues; and
- incorporate an increasingly sophisticated intersectional analysis as the process builds over time.

### **Tackling policy and legislative change**

There is compelling evidence, through the International Gender Gap Index, to suggest that gender disparity can be tackled effectively through legislative action on quotas, action plans and reporting.<sup>8</sup> This research also shows that gender equality legislation improves gender equality overall, including outside of the public sector. In other words, legislating on gender equality is effective in speeding up the pace of change and is critical to shifts in policy, social norms, attitudes and expectations. A Gender Equality Framework and its underpinning legislation can thus play a significant role in facilitating real progress for women and other marginalised groups.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf)

YWCA Australia recommends the **implementation of a Gender Equality Bill** to mandate action on gender equality across the NT government. This will require a bi-partisan approach across all levels of government, including in the development and implementation of the legislation. This could include implementing mandates and incentives for the broader workforce, and ensuring anti-discrimination legislation is up-to-date and being rigorously implemented.

In line with this, the NT Government should consider **revision and development of all government and public sector policies** with a gender lens, with clearly delegated responsibility to all departments. This also includes encouraging the workforce more broadly to undertake policy review and more rigorous implementation of existing policies including special measures and flexible work arrangements.

## Key Focus Areas

Given our expertise in supporting young women and girls and understanding the large body of evidence highlighting that young women often experience higher levels of disadvantage and discrimination; YWCA Australia will mostly focus our recommendations upon this demographic.

### Safety

Young women aged 16-24 are among the most vulnerable to varying forms of violence. For example, young women experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.<sup>9</sup> Young women as young as 11 years old report street harassment of a sexual nature<sup>10</sup>, and one in four young women in Australia have reported experiencing the non-consensual sharing of sexual images.<sup>11</sup> The strongest predictors of attitudes supportive of violence against women are people having a low level of support for gender equality and a low level of understanding of the behaviours constituting violence against women (relative to other respondents)<sup>12</sup>.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience disproportionate rates of violence, and the violence is often more severe. Three in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a male intimate partner and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are eleven times more likely to die as a result of assault. The statistics are shocking and the voices of indigenous peoples are clear, violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is not an 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander problem. The problem is a complex one which include racism and sexism and compounded by the ongoing impacts of colonialism. First Nations' Peoples are best placed to lead change to end violence against women and children in their communities.

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<sup>9</sup> ABS 2017. Personal Safety, Australia, 2016. ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.plan.org.au/-/media/plan/documents/reports/sexism-in-the-city-plan-international-australia-embargoed-copy.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse/about/research>

<sup>12</sup> 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)



We are more aware than ever about the issues of safety for women, and YWCA's consultations shows that young women are frustrated with the lack of action to address their safety. Four of our Young Women's Council members are based in the NT and report changing their behaviours depending on their perception and experiences of safety in public spaces. They recalled avoiding certain areas within Darwin when travelling by themselves or after dark. Incidences of street harassment, verbal and physical abuse are not uncommon and go largely unreported; it is expected and normalised. When talking about how to tackle this issue young women often express apathy, a sad realisation that "this is the way it will always be".

### **YWCA Australia recommendations on Safety:**

Improving young women's safety will need to incorporate low-cost initiatives driven by community as well as critical resource allocation measures not limited to but including:

- Implementing community **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** principles into urban planning, which is proven to reduce criminal activity and increase perceptions of safety in the community. Integrating a **gender mainstreaming** approach into urban and environmental design is also key to ensuring women's experiences and interests are incorporated (e.g. sufficient lighting in urban spaces, encouragement of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in streets and artwork that provides social commentary on gender equality and women's empowerment in public spaces).
- Resourcing **comprehensive Respectful Relationships Education**, such as the YWCA's *Respect Communicate Choose* program in schools to build gender equitable attitudes and behaviours in young people.
- Guaranteeing **adequate, accessible and sustainable provision of domestic and family violence services** across urban, rural and regional/remote locations in the NT. These services must be culturally appropriate and take a wholistic, rights-based approach to the safety of women and children in all their diversity. This should also include support for those with pets who are feeling violence.
- Resourcing **comprehensive trauma-recovery programming** such as the YWCA's *Young Women's Accommodation and Trauma Recovery Program*. Recognising and responding to experiences domestic and/or family violence for children and young people is critical to breaking the cycles of violence, decreasing the likelihood of further trauma and increasing feelings of safety and recovery. We know that comprehensive support is required at this critical time of development for young people.
- Partner with organisations, like YWCA Australia, and listen to and involve the voices of women, young women and girls in the development, implementation and evaluation of safety service provision.

### **Health and wellbeing**

YWCA Australia commends the NT Government's consideration of the life cycle of women's health, understanding that women have different health needs and interests across their lifespan. The evidence



is clear: gender is considered one of the most powerful determinants of health outcomes. Women and gender diverse people are significantly affected by systemic, cultural and social gendered health inequalities and an intersectional approach to health and wellbeing would seek to address this.

Although Australian women have one of the best life expectancy rates in the world, shockingly, this is not the case if you are an Indigenous woman, with a gap in life expectancy of ten years (82 for non-Indigenous women compared to 72 for Indigenous women). This is of particular concern for the NT which has the largest proportion of Indigenous women in Australia.

For young women, a key issue is access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, which is particularly significant in the NT given that the region has a much higher incidence of sexually transmitted infections than other states.<sup>13</sup> A critical and yet often overlooked issue that disproportionately affects young women is the need for **comprehensive sexuality education**. A survey of young women aged 18-30 in Australia showed they believe sex education is limited and does not meet their needs.<sup>14</sup> This survey also indicated that young women want more education on positive and respectful relationships, which should be incorporated into sex education in schools and communities. An intersectional approach to health and wellbeing in the NT must also consider how to address violence, risk-taking behaviors and excessive alcohol consumption by young men. Young men are also more likely to work in dangerous occupations and less likely to visit the doctor or follow up a consultation. These are harmful cultural norms that perpetuate gender roles and stereotypes, which impact on mental health, and contribute to the high suicide rates in young men.

YWCA Australia's Women of Worth program delivered in the NT, which supports women who have been involved with the justice system to positively re-engage with the community and reduce reoffending. In December 2018, Women of Worth won the Fitzgerald Justice Award for contributing significantly to the protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights in the area of law and justice. The importance of supporting women in the justice system has been acknowledged in the NT Women's Policy Framework, with a commitment to "ensuring effective support for women victims and survivors, including those in the Northern Territory justice system".

#### **YWCA Australia recommendations on Health & Wellbeing:**

- Increasing **access to affordable and appropriate sexual health services** in the NT
- Making **comprehensive sexuality education** encompassing respectful relationships education available to every young person in the NT
- Increasing investment in **health promotion and primary prevention services** to improve health outcomes for Indigenous women, particularly those in rural and remote areas

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<sup>13</sup> Office of Women's Policy 2015, *Policy Framework for Northern Territory Women 2015-2022*  
<http://www.5050foundation.edu.au/assets/reports/documents/Nothern-Territory-Womens-Policy-Framework-2015-2020.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Lets-Talk-Final-Report.pdf>

- Challenging unhealthy female beauty standards and promoting healthy body images for men, women and gender diverse people
- Providing support for women and girls who have experienced female genital mutilation
- Promoting positive health norms to boys and men that contradict gender stereotypes that men must be physically and emotionally strong and dominant
- Providing **comprehensive and inclusive mental health services**, particularly targeting young Aboriginal people in rural and remote areas
- Expansion of the **YWCA's Women of Worth program** and other programs that provide a gender lens on the justice system and recidivism, and support community participation, education, and employment opportunities for marginalised women such as those involved in the justice system
- Partner with organisations like, YWCA Australia, and listen to and incorporate the voices of women, young women and girls in the development, implementation and evaluation of health service provision

## Economic security

Women and in particular, young women, still face obvious barriers to workplace equality and economic security. A common theme in our consultations with young women is that they want action now, they can see the impact that a lifetime of disproportionate earning has on superannuation and their economic security in the future. There is a clear mandate for governments, businesses and the not-for-profit sector to take the gender pay gap seriously and address it comprehensively through a gender equality framework that has buy in across government. This should be coupled with efforts to promote flexibility and better work-life balance for all people in the workplace.

Over the past 20 years the number of female-run small businesses in Australia has increased significantly, at almost double the rate of male-run small businesses. Promoting entrepreneurship as an economic opportunity is a key avenue for women, particularly for newly arrived migrants and refugees, those in regional areas, and those living with a disability.<sup>15</sup> In Australia women are in part-time employment at three times the rate of men. Significant numbers of women choose part-time and casual employment below their skill level so they can manage unpaid care and paid work.

YWCA Australia notes that the NT has one of the highest gender pay gaps in Australia at 15.5% as of 2018, although it has seen a significant decrease from 20.6% in 2017.<sup>16</sup> This pay gap begins at a young age and builds throughout women's lives, resulting in women retiring with on average half the amount of superannuation than men. Young women are also more likely to experience economic disadvantages.

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<sup>15</sup> *Almost a third of female business operators are born overseas, close to a third of female small business operators live in regional areas, and 12 per cent of women employers and sole operators identify as living with a disability.*

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.wgea.gov.au/data/fact-sheets/australias-gender-pay-gap-statistics>

For example young women are at a higher risk of ‘sexually transmitted debt’, which is debt inherited from a partner or a relationship with a former partner.

Young women and girls are also a group in need of secure housing and at risk of homelessness due to various reasons including domestic violence, caring responsibilities, and lack of financial stability. Youth services indicate that there are often a lack of housing and homelessness services for young people under 18, and this is exacerbated when young women have children in their care.<sup>17</sup>

Care and domestic work is another key area for women, and despite being a critical element to a functioning society, it is drastically undervalued. Women in the NT largely carry the burden of providing economic security for families through unpaid care and domestic work<sup>18</sup>. Many Indigenous Australians living remotely have further challenges around work and labour. Work ‘on country’ where Indigenous peoples undertake customary work for their livelihoods is severely undervalued and rarely incentivised by government policies<sup>19</sup>.

#### **YWCA Australia recommendations on Economic Security:**

- Developing a **gender-responsive approach to housing and homelessness** and play a leading role in negotiating with the Commonwealth Government to develop National Housing and Homelessness Agreements that address gender and other forms of marginalisation
- Significantly **increasing social and affordable housing stock** to ensure women, young women and girls have access to safe and affordable housing, particularly in regional and remote areas, in an effort to increase their economic security
- Providing **superannuation during paid parental leave** to all employees within the public sector and encourage business to do the same
- Promoting and **supporting women’s entrepreneurship and small businesses** through grant mechanisms and other opportunities, with particular attention to women living with disability
- Encouraging employers in the NT to **reduce the gender pay gap** by (1) identifying barriers for women in their workplace (2) setting targets and action plans to reduce barriers (3) being accountable for results through external reporting
- Providing **ten days of paid domestic violence leave** for employees experiencing domestic and family violence to ensure a supportive culture within the workplace and ensure victims are not financially disadvantaged or experience job insecurity<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Flinders University Institute for Housing, Urban and Regional Research 2008, *Women, Domestic and Family Violence and Homelessness*, [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2012/synthesis\\_report2008.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/synthesis_report2008.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [1] Waring, M. (1999). *Counting for Nothing: What men value and what women are worth*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

<sup>19</sup> See Jordan, K. (ed.) (2016). *Better than welfare? Work and livelihood for Indigenous Australians after CDEP*. Canberra: ANU Press. <http://www.5050foundation.edu.au/assets/reports/documents/From-Girls-to-Men.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> While provisions for paid leave for domestic violence are currently provided by ‘Miscellaneous Leave’, creating specific leave provisions for those experiencing domestic and family violence sends a strong message that victims will be supported and will not face penalties for taking time to deal with related matters.

- Partner with organisations like YWCA Australia and listen to and involve the voices of women, young women and girls in the development, implementation and evaluation of economic security initiatives

## Leadership and participation

Gender equality leadership is crucial to the implementation of a gender equality framework. Data from WGEA shows that women and men are concentrated in particular industries, showing that six in ten Australians work in an industry that is dominated by one gender.

Research shows that if women are supported to transition into STEM careers, they could be on the path to more productive, better-paid work. If they cannot, they could face a growing wage gap or be left further behind when progress toward gender parity in work is already slow.<sup>21</sup> At the same time we are encouraging more women into STEM industries we need to be encouraging men into female-dominated professions including nursing and aged care. This is because economic forecasts show significant growth in human services, and global trends towards increased automation are reducing the need for some male dominated industries, so a balance must be struck that does not perpetuate a gendered workforce that leads to economic inequalities.

Discrimination in the workplace is another key issue that should be addressed by a Gender Equality Framework. Women in Australia report high rates of sexual harassment in the workplace. Data from the NT Anti-Discrimination Commission shows this to be the case in the NT across industry and location. Encouragingly, the flow on effect of the 'Me Too' movement has seen an increase in sexual harassment complaints in many discrimination jurisdictions in Australia, suggesting that women are more confident and supported to speak out about sexism and sexual harassment. However, the same trend has not occurred in the NT<sup>22</sup>.

The NT Government can play a significant role in enabling structural and cultural change in workplaces to encourage more women to feel supported make complaints. This includes reviewing and updating policy and processes for reporting, providing staff training, and framing workplace sexual harassment within Workplace Health and Safety approaches.

### **YWCA Australia recommendations on Leadership & Participation:**

- **Move the 'Office of Gender Equity and Diversity' into the Department of the Chief Minister** to elevate the gender equality portfolio and ensure sufficient resourcing and integration of a gender equality framework
- Integrating a gender lens to the NT Government's '*STEM in the Territory Strategy 2018-2022*'
- Supporting initiatives that **promote young women in STEM** fields and conversely, promote care, health and social work fields to young men

<sup>21</sup>McKinsey Global Institute 2019, *The Future of Women at Work: Transitions into the age of automation*,

<sup>22</sup> [https://justice.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/660097/annualreport\\_2017\\_2018.pdf](https://justice.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/660097/annualreport_2017_2018.pdf), p14

- Acknowledging and celebrating the achievements of NT women
- Investing in **Indigenous women's leadership** initiatives (for example through programs such as YWCA's [Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program](#))
- Supporting women on boards in leadership programming to provide flexible support packages for women pursuing a board career, including through networking, scholarship programs, mentoring and capacity building
- Providing training for public sector employees such as **Unconscious Bias Training** and **Bystander Intervention Training** to shift attitudes and behaviours based on gender inequality in the workplace.
- Implementing **Gender Equality Action Plans** into all government departments to embed gender equity into workplaces and increase leadership pathways for women.
- Fostering youth and emerging leadership initiatives for women and gender diverse people to support a pipeline of new leaders through development, networking and mentoring
- Foster the leadership of women from culturally diverse backgrounds, LGBTI communities, as well as women with a disability as a key intersectional approach to leadership
- Increase **investment into women's sport**, including upgrading facilities to ensure they are appropriate and accessible for young women and girls.
- Establish an **NT Women's Roundtable** to actioning gender equality framework and leadership in the local government sector
- Partner with organisations like YWCA Australia and listen to and involve the voices of women, young women and girls in the development, implementation and evaluation of leadership initiatives

## Conclusion

YWCA Australia thanks the NT Government for the opportunity to provide feedback to the development of the Gender Equality Framework and we look forward to a robust and comprehensive strategy, and implementation.

Please visit our website for more information on our programs and services in the Australia and the NT:  
<https://www.ywca.org.au/>