

FIGHTING FOR GENDER EQUITY

SUPPORTING WOMEN TO THRIVE

The Canberra community has benefited from rich contributions of women throughout its history and the success of our city is dependent on all women being able to flourish.

The ACT Greens want to see a future where all women and non-binary people can contribute their skills and talents and are supported to reach their full potential.

We know that there are huge barriers for many women, and some women experience multiple intersecting disadvantages, including First Nations women; women with disability; women in the LGBTIQ+ community and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We know that we need to continue to work to ensure there is equal access to education, economic opportunities and that women are supported throughout the lifecycle.

Gender based violence has its roots in gender inequality, gender stereotyping and gender-based discrimination. We must continue to work to eliminate these, as well as taking seriously the national emergency that sees women systematically the victims of gender based violence, sexual assault and domestic and family violence.

The ACT Greens will continue to fight for the human rights of everyone in our community. We will vigorously, consistently and loudly campaign to ensure everyone is supported to reach their potential and contribute to our community.

THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Introduce a gender budgeting statement on the ACT Budget
- ▲ Ensure women are supported, encouraged and promoted in Government roles
- ▲ Ensure health services are delivered in a way that acknowledges and responds to the unique needs of women and gender-diverse people
- ▲ Support women to thrive in predominantly male industries
- ▲ Develop a plan to eliminate gender based violence in the ACT
- ▲ Ensure adequate resourcing for evidence based education and behaviour change programs.

HISTORY OF THE ACT GREENS STANDING UP FOR WOMEN

The ACT Greens are proud of the work we have done over many years to support women and girls, champion women's human rights and stamp out gender-based violence.

In 2015, the ACT Greens introduced laws to ensure privacy zones around medical facilities that provide abortion and reproductive health services: women now access the services they need without intimidation or harassment.

In 2018, we introduced legislation to enable ACT women to better access medical abortions and in 2022 we supported changes to ensure all women could access them free of charge.

Over the past term we have:

- Championed positive consent laws and stronger legislation around intimate images.
- Worked in partnership to strengthen laws and systems to support victim survivors of sexual assault.
- Secured a commitment to introduce a freestanding birth centre.
- Enthusiastically supported changes to eliminate period poverty in the ACT.
- Supported the work to celebrate the role of women in Canberra

and Australia through naming conventions, statues and other opportunities to celebrate.

BUT THERE IS STILL SO MUCH TO DO

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

We need to continue the work to develop meaningful and purposeful gender budgeting, so that we are confident that the money we are spending makes a significant difference in the lives of women and girls, and creates a community that is truly equitable.

We will ensure the budget provides a meaningful gender budgeting statement.

We will ensure ACT Government Directorates report meaningful and comparative statistics over time including the gender breakdown of all agencies, the pay levels of staff (including reporting the pay gap across the service), and gender responsive workplace policies in their annual reports

SHOW LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT

The ACT Government must continue to show leadership as a model employer for women.

We will continue to implement the policy of ensuring equal representation of women on boards and commitment appointments and ensure women's leadership, economic empowerment and community involvement is a focus of the Government.

We will look at our procurement rules to encourage businesses and suppliers to support women's leadership in Government projects – in building and construction, the service industries and other areas.

We will continue the work to ensure that all ACTPS employees have working arrangements that are modern and suitable for parents, carers and those looking for more workplace flexibility. This includes looking at part time arrangements in operational areas (for example Transport Canberra) and supporting the roll out of Gender Diversity Action Plans for ACT Government agencies.

We will show government leadership in supporting equal pay cases in feminised industries, and ensuring these are factored into service agreements and contracts procured by ACT Government.

PRIORITISE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

As we see a significant investment in our ACT health system, the ACT Greens will ensure that women and girls across the city can access appropriate health services, and women have choices about the care that they access.

The ACT Greens will continue to promote the need for a variety of choices around maternity care for women and people who are pregnant, with an emphasis on choice and continuity of care.

We will deliver a birth attendant-led freestanding birth centre in north

Canberra, and expand access to birth attendant-led continuity of care for anyone who wants to choose it by 2032.

We'll also ensure that all gestational parents who wish to access models of care such as home birth have a framework in which they can access qualified birth attendants and healthcare professionals.

We will facilitate birth attendants to work to their full scope of practice and will also give privately practising birth attendants admitting rights in our public hospitals which will enable them to provide continuity of care in the event of a homebirth transfer to hospital, and allow women and pregnant people to choose to give birth in hospital under the care of their chosen privately practising birth attendant.

We have committed to building a dedicated perinatal mental health inpatient unit where parent and baby can stay together; a perinatal Step Up Step Down residential service for parents and babies to stay together as a step up from community mental health care at home, or transitioning home after an inpatient stay; and a drop-in perinatal mental health centre similar to the Safe Haven in Belconnen, separate to but co-located with the perinatal Step Up Step Down service .

We are committed to ensuring that health services are delivered in a way that acknowledges and responds to the unique needs of women and gender-diverse people.

We recognise that women, in particular, are often underrepresented in diagnoses and face barriers to accessing treatment due to systemic gender bias. For instance, women are less likely to receive timely diagnoses for conditions such as autism or ADHD, which can lead to gaps in care and support. Our new services will actively address these disparities by incorporating gender-sensitive models of care, ensuring that all individuals receive equitable and comprehensive support tailored to their needs.

Our commitment to assisted reproductive technology (for example, IVF) is an exploration of how we can provide this as a public service to everyone who needs it, including people who require assistance for reasons other than medical infertility. This may include people in our LGBTIQ+ community, and people with disability.

We recognise that many women in the ACT with long-term health conditions find it difficult to access good ongoing health care from someone who understands their condition and can see them regularly. By providing easier access to GPs who are supported by ACT Government to maintain their special interest in mental health and musculoskeletal conditions and bulk bill their patients, we will be able to provide more holistic primary care with a gendered lens to women with these conditions, reducing preventable hospital admissions and supporting better whole-of-life outcomes.

Building on the significant services that we have established in the last four years, we will continue our commitment to expanding eating disorder services in the ACT by establishing a day program for people who need additional support after an inpatient or residential treatment stay. We will also deliver a dedicated eating disorder inpatient unit where medical stabilisation and psychological therapy are integrated in the model of care.

SMASH GENDER STEREOTYPES AND SUPPORT WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

We will support predominantly male industries that show leadership in promoting women's economic empowerment and engagement. The building and construction industry is one sector where we will partner to ensure women are welcomed and encouraged to be a key part of this part of the economy. This includes targeted initiatives for recruitment, mentorship, and professional development, ensuring that women have equal opportunities to build successful careers in construction.

We will support the work to ensure that predominantly female industries have appropriate pay and conditions, strong career pathways for women, men and all genders. In addition, our commitment to provide more wraparound support and scholarships for the early education and care workforce will overwhelmingly support women's economic empowerment given we know that this workforce is more than 90% women. We

will support funding for community sector contracts with ACT Government that enable workers to have pay and conditions comparable to similar work in the private sector and public service.

We will continue to support programs within ACT public schools that encourage young women to stay involved in STEM based curriculum, and be encouraged to identify pathways into careers in this area.

SHOW LEADERSHIP TO ELIMINATE GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

We will focus on the elimination of gendered violence through development of a more ambitious, measurable and accountable ACT plan, developed in close consultation with services that respond to domestic, family and sexual violence and with victim survivors. This can include exploring how to regulate damaging industries that exacerbate it like young people's access to pornography online and gambling.

We will provide sufficient funds to fully realise the recommendations in the Sexual Assault Police Review, and continue to support and adequately resource the implementation of the recommendations in the *Listen, Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* report by the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee.

We are committed to continued legislative reform, including:

- examining criminalising coercive control in conjunction with people

- with lived experience, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and community organisations that support them;
- exploring banning non-disclosure agreements in sexual harassment claims;
- exploring how to ensure that victim survivors of family and domestic violence in private rental accommodation can be protected from bearing the costs of damage or debt incurred by people who chose to use violence; and
- legislative change and training resources to ensure that domestic and family violence services have the same privileged communications with victim survivors as other frontline and support services the person might be communicating with.

IMPROVE EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

The ACT Greens will ensure the resourcing of evidence based primary prevention programs, including work to support respectful relations education and positive consent programs. These programs will be age appropriate, and draw on the extensive evidence base that has been developed in this area.

We will provide dedicated funding for the delivery of Men's Behaviour Change programs for primary prevention, intervention and education services tailored for boys and men, with women and children's advocacy and support operating alongside. These programs will address the root causes of harmful

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behaviours, while also promoting respectful relationships and positive masculinity.

Alongside these initiatives, we will ensure that advocacy and support services for women and children operate in parallel, creating a holistic and integrated approach to ending violence and fostering safer communities for everyone.

The ACT Greens commit to providing longer term and adequate funding certainty for agencies that respond to sexual, domestic and family violence who are struggling to keep up with demand for their services. This includes additional funding for community sector organisations supporting victim survivors of domestic and family violence and sexual violence.

We will provide immediate transitional financial support that will enable services to continue at existing levels until the completion of their next commissioning process.

We will also include an annual population level adjustment to community sector contracts, continue to resource the Sector Sustainability project for the community sector, and establish a genuine partnership between ACT Government and the sector that reduces bureaucracy and increases support for our community sector organisations.