**Gender Equity**

**Guide for Policy Sponsors**

This guide assists Policy Sponsors to consider gender impacts and address any equity implications during policy development, implementation or review. Considering gender impacts involves:

* acknowledging that issues can affect women differently to men
* acknowledging that differences in women’s and men’s lives mean that women’s needs and concerns are often different to men’s
* investigating the specific needs of women and the likely impact on them of policies
* highlighting differences among women with regards to a range of demographic factors, separate or together, including age, race, disability, religion, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender identity and caring responsibilities
* seeking the views of women and making their input a critical part of developing policies
* understanding that simply treating everyone the same may not address gender inequality
* promoting women’s participation in social and economic life to the benefit of the community at large.

# Gender Equality is the law

The Queensland and Commonwealth governments have each made commitments to gender equality, expressed in policies, legislation and agreements at state, national and international levels.

Federal anti-discrimination legislation

The [*Sex Discrimination Act 1984*](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/legislation#Age) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, marital or relationship status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status or breastfeeding in a range of areas of public life. This Act gives effect to Australia's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It is actioned via the [Australian Human Rights Commission](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/)

Federal employment provisions

The [*Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2012C00899) aims to improve and promote equality for both women and men in the workplace. It replaced the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*, and is administered by the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](https://www.wgea.gov.au/).

State Anti-discrimination legislation

The [*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Queensland)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/A/AntiDiscrimA91.pdf) and the [*Human Rights Act 2019*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2019-005) aims to promote human rights and protect people in Queensland from unfair discrimination, sexual harassment and other offensive conduct. The Act is administered by the [Queensland Human Rights Commission](https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/)

State employment provisions

The [*Public Service Act 2008*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisltn/current/p/publicserva08.pdf), [*Industrial Relations Act 2016*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2016/16AC063.pdf) and various Queensland Industrial Relations Awards further protect against sex and gender discrimination in employment. (More [information](https://www.treasury.qld.gov.au/fair-and-safe-work/industrial-relations/):)

The United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The CEDAW sets an agenda for national action to end discrimination against women, and promote equality. It commits Australia to taking steps to eliminate discrimination against women and work towards equality for women in all areas of social, economic and political life. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and ratified by Australia in 1983.

**QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE CONSIDERATION OF GENDER IMPACTS**

STAGE 1: **Identifying issues**

**This stage provides an opportunity to explore the issues and impacts associated with the development of your policy. The nature and scope of the policy should be fully considered.**

**Note**: Gender issues may be central to the policy in question, or less clear. During the definition stage, don’t assume any policy is gender neutral.

* Will the policy affect women and men in different ways?
  + If yes, how might sub-groups of these population groups be affected, such as the elderly or those with a disability?
* Might groups be unintentionally excluded from this policy?
* What don’t we know about the issues and impacts?
* Who else is addressing these issues?

STAGE 2: **Gathering evidence**

**This stage identifies what is known or unknown about the gendered nature of the issues above and identify available and relevant data and data sources.**

**Note**: Your own values and experiences may affect your perception and/or willingness to investigate the issues. The established priorities and processes of your work area may also affect your ability to ask new questions and hear unexpected answers.

* Do we have gender disaggregated data on the issues?
* Is the available data:
  + also disaggregated by other demographic attributes (i.e. age, race, region and disability)?
* Has research been conducted on gender components of these issues?
* What information have we collected from those with experience and knowledge in this area?
* Are there identified gender gaps relating to these issues?
* Are other models available, addressing these issues?

STAGE 3: **Identifying and defining outcomes**

**Use this stage to identify desired goals and expected outcomes for your policy to ensure equitable outcomes for men and women.**

**Note**: Beware of unintended and undesirable outcomes. Different measures may be required for outcomes to be equitable for all people.

* What are the desired outcomes of the policy?
* What are the specific factors that could affect the achievement of outcomes (e.g. pregnancy, workplace sexual harassment, childcare/family responsibilities)?
* Are there negative outcomes for women, men or gender diverse people?
  + Are some groups of people excluded from the outcomes?
* What are our legal obligations regarding gender equity and equality? Will they be breached or supported by the proposed options?
* Are there factors associated with women’s roles that could modify the possibility of achieving the outcomes (such as pregnancy, caring responsibilities)?
* What are our measures (performance indicators) to evaluate the outcomes?