

Executive summary



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Introduction

Women in NSW 2013 continues the NSW Government's evaluation of gender equity in five topic areas central to women's lives. Some 90 gender indicators are covered in chapters on health and wellbeing, education and learning, work and financial security, leadership and safety and justice.

As with last year's Report, it provides data for government, business and the community sector for use in policy-making, decision-making and program design. This is the second 'annual report card' on women in NSW, and this Report is the first that allows progress to be tracked over time.

Leading indicators were selected for each topic based on the criteria outlined on page 12. Our consultations after the first *Women in NSW* Report has led to new indicators and other refinements in this year's Report.

Chapter One: A profile of NSW women

Women in NSW are likely to live in cities, come from diverse cultural backgrounds and speak many languages.

Aboriginal women make up 2.5 percent of the female population of NSW, which in 2011 was 3.5 million women or 51 percent of the state's population. In 2011, nearly two-thirds of NSW women lived in Greater Sydney, with 24 percent living in regional, rural and remote NSW.

The median age of women in NSW in 2011 (38 years) is nearly two years older than that of men. Women are more likely to live longer than men; however, the gap is closing.

Over a quarter of NSW women were born overseas, and over one in four spoke a language other than English at home.

The majority of NSW women (67 percent) are of the Christian faith. However, minority religious groups are growing in size as the proportion of women identifying as Christians shrinks.

Over a third of women 65 years and over live alone. Women between the ages of 80 and 84 years are more than twice as likely as men to be living alone.

Chapter Two: Health and wellbeing

NSW women have mixed outcomes across the range of health and wellbeing indicators.

The three main troublespots are psychological distress, including self-harm among women, fall-related hospitalisations and the sexually transmitted disease of Chlamydia. In addition, more women suffer from arthritis, long and short sightedness and osteoporosis than men, after taking their different age structure into account.

A serious preventative health issue is women's lower rate of physical activity compared to men and compared to wellbeing guidelines. The most improvement in recent years has occurred among women from higher socio-economic groups.

However, NSW women are not likely to smoke (only 13 percent identify as smokers), and half as many women as men drink at risky levels. The overall trend to reduced smoking is less strongly evident among low socio-economic women.

The health of women is dependent on many factors, not only those normally considered within the usual medical model. As our first Report observed, consideration also needs to be given to social, economic and educational factors that affect health, many of which are covered in other parts of the Report.

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Chapter Three: Education and learning

This year for the first time in NSW, we report that more boys than girls completed Year 12 in 2011. For the period 2002-10, NSW girls' school outcomes were improving at a faster rate than boys'. In post-school education girls' attainment continues to outstrip boys' at most levels, although across the whole working-age population, women remain slightly less qualified than men.

Women and girls remain under-represented in subjects that lead to the highest earning professions. The gender gap in girls' and boys' HSC completions in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) increased this year, with 31 percent of girls completions in these subjects compared to 45 percent of boys'. In higher education there was a 10 percentage point gender gap on STEM subject choice.

The importance of vocational education and training (VET) opportunities for early school leavers, and for certain groups of women is noted this year. Aboriginal women participated in VET at more than double their rate in the population in 2011.

Education is important for everyone, but it is especially important for girls and women. Women's educational achievements act as springboards, allowing them to pursue opportunities previously out of their reach.

Chapter Four: Work and financial security

In 2013, women made up 46 percent of employed people in NSW. However, two-fifths work part-time and 28 percent are engaged as casuals. Access to paid work is central to women's financial and social independence and crucial for the NSW economy.

Despite the overall improvement in women's workforce status, in many areas gender gaps are closing only gradually. For instance, in 1978 the percentage of full-time employment held by women was 28 percent; today it is still only 36 percent. Under-employment (wanting more hours of work) remains a major issue for women, and in 2012 affected nearly 9 percent of women in the labour force compared to just over 5 percent of men. Trades and technical jobs are also slow to change, with a discussion this year of 'the missing 48 percent' – women in the highly male-dominated trades such as automotive and construction where they make up less than 2 percent of workers.

More positively, women part-time workers are now more likely to be employed in ongoing, as opposed to casual, jobs. Half of part-time workers were casual in 2011 compared to nearly two-thirds in 1992. Indeed, 42 percent of mothers with children under 12 report using part-time work to help them care for children. It is rarely used by fathers who instead are more likely to use flexible working hours. In other new data in this year's Report, there appears to have been swift uptake of Parental Leave Payments by new mothers in NSW in 2011.

Chapter Five: Leadership

Since last year's Report, local government elections have been held in NSW. While a record number of women stood as candidates (34 percent), the number elected (28 percent) was the same as in 1999.

Meanwhile, women's representation in the NSW Legislative Assembly continues to decrease and currently stands at 20 percent.

In Australia's top ASX 500 companies headquartered in NSW, women's representation on boards and in the senior executive ranks is very low at 12 percent and 10 percent respectively.

Women's representation on community boards, and among entrepreneurs, are new indicators this year. Around 51 percent of board members in not-for-profit organisations are women. And despite popular perceptions of women's dominance in small business, women make up around one third of business owners, in both incorporated (29 percent) and unincorporated businesses (34 percent).

Leadership gender equality has increased in recent decades; however, there are areas where progress has been slow, very recent or has stalled altogether.

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Chapter Six: Safety and justice

Although overall, more men are victims of homicide or physical assault, women are less safe within families and communities.

Women are more than twice as likely as men to experience domestic violence and five times more likely than men to be sexually assaulted and have the assault perpetrated by their partner.

In the 12 months to September 2012, some 20,700 women were the victims of a recorded domestic violence-related assault in NSW. Surveys suggest the actual incidence is far greater. Women make up nearly 70 percent of people protected by Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders.

Aboriginal women's rate of domestic violence remains around seven times that of other women, although their rate has declined considerably during the last decade.

New data on offenders and prisoners show women as currently making up 21 percent of NSW offenders and 7 percent of the NSW prison population. The share of women offenders in assault cases has increased since 2005, with the rate increasing most among women aged 50 and over.

Illicit drug offences are the most common cause of women's imprisonment.

How does NSW compare?

NSW makes up a third of the Australian population, and it is not surprising that NSW women's status and experiences are very similar to those of Australian women more widely. However, as described in the first chapter, more women in NSW speak a language other than English at home, and in the inter-censal period 2006 to 2011, NSW had the largest numerical increase in its Aboriginal female population of any state or territory.

Indicators of NSW women's health are slightly better than the national average in some cases and slightly worse in others. Fewer NSW women are current smokers, but more are sedentary or engage in low levels of exercise. (Note that this national indicator is different to the one used in Chapter Two, Health and Wellbeing).

Across Australia, women's educational participation and qualifications have risen everywhere. In NSW in 2012, 59 percent of adult women had a post-school qualification at Certificate III and above, compared to 54 percent nationally. As reported in 2012, NSW women have lower overall labour force participation rates (perhaps based on their higher participation in full-time education), but a high rate among women in the child-bearing years.

The graduate earnings gap, as last year, was higher in NSW than nationally with the median earnings of NSW women graduates \$5,000 less per annum than those of equivalent men in their first full-time job. Nationally, the difference between female and male graduates was \$2,000 per annum in 2011, due to the higher earnings of NSW men.

However, among the non-managerial workforce as a whole, NSW women earn slightly more on an hourly basis than Australian women.

Crime and safety indicators suggest that NSW women are slightly safer on average than Australian women overall. NSW women are far less likely to be victims of physical assault. 2.7 percent of NSW women reported an incident of physical assault in the 12 months prior to the survey compared to 4.3 percent of Australian women (2010-11 data). Offender rates were also lower, at 643 per 100,000 NSW women compared to 834 per 100,000 nationally in 2010-11.

Women in NSW – how have things changed?

Demography

TOPIC	CHANGE	WOMEN IN NSW 2012	WOMEN IN NSW 2013	PAGE
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	↑	2.1% <small>Census 2006</small>	2.5% <small>Census 2011</small>	15
 Overseas born	↑	24% <small>Census 2006</small>	26% <small>Census 2011</small>	23
 Median age, first-time mothers	=	29 <small>ABS Births, Australia, 2010</small>	29 <small>ABS Births, Australia, 2011</small>	19

Health

TOPIC	CHANGE	WOMEN IN NSW 2012	WOMEN IN NSW 2013	PAGE
 Intentional self-harm	↑	358 <small>per 100,000</small> <small>NSW Admitted Patient Data Collection, 2010-11</small>	410 <small>per 100,000</small> <small>NSW Admitted Patient Data Collection, 2011-12</small>	40
 Long-term health conditions	≈	75% <small>ABS National Health Survey, 2007-08 (age standardised)</small>	77% <small>ABS Australian Health Survey, 2011-12 (age standardised)</small>	32
 Current smokers	≈	14% <small>NSW Adult Population Health Survey, 2010</small>	13% <small>NSW Adult Population Health Survey, 2011</small>	49

Education

TOPIC	CHANGE	WOMEN IN NSW 2012	WOMEN IN NSW 2013	PAGE
 % of women commencing technical and trades apprenticeships	↑	16.2% <small>NCVER, Apprenticeships and Traineeship Collection, 2011</small>	17.4% <small>NCVER, Apprenticeships and Traineeship Collection, 2012</small>	76
 % of girls completing Year 12	≈	72% <small>Review of Government Service Provision, 2010</small>	71% <small>Review of Government Service Provision, 2011</small>	63
 STEM* subjects (higher ed)	↓	33% <small>DEEWR, Higher Education Statistics Collection, 2010</small>	31% <small>Dept of Innovation, Higher Education Statistics Collection, 2011</small>	65

*Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

Women in NSW – how have things changed?

Key
 ↑ Number or rate has risen
 ↓ Number or rate has fallen
 = Number or rate stayed equal
 ≈ Number or rate stayed similar

Work

TOPIC	CHANGE	WOMEN IN NSW 2012	WOMEN IN NSW 2013	PAGE
 Casual work <small>ABS Australian Labour Market Statistics, 2010</small>	=	28%	28%	101
 Unpaid housework (hours spent by women) <small>HILDA 2010</small>	↓	15	14	108
 Women's hourly earnings as a % of men's <small>ABS Employee Earnings and Hours, 2010</small>	↑	88%	92%	120

Leadership

TOPIC	CHANGE	WOMEN IN NSW 2012	WOMEN IN NSW 2013	PAGE
 % of elected councillors in NSW Local Councils that are women <small>Council and NSW Electoral Commission websites, 2008</small>	≈	25%	26%	135
 % of directorships in NSW - based ASX 200 companies** <small>Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2012</small>	↑	17%	18%	144
 % of secondary school principals who are women <small>Department and Education and Communities, 2011</small>	↑	36%	38%	152

Safety

TOPIC	CHANGE	WOMEN IN NSW 2012	WOMEN IN NSW 2013	PAGE
 Number of domestic violence homicides against women <small>NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2011</small>	↑	23	27	167
 Number of sexual assaults against women <small>NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2011</small>	≈	3,940	3,960	171
 Number of women protected by ADVOs (per 100,000) <small>NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2010</small>	↑	730	767	181

**200 largest index eligible stocks on Australian Securities Exchange
 ***Apprehended domestic violence orders (ADVO)