

# Introduction



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Photo: Jessica Brown from Rose Bay, Winner of the 2013 People's Choice – Community Hero Woman of the Year

# Introduction

## The NSW Government's commitment to women

The NSW Government is pleased to publish the second annual report on the status of women in NSW. The Report is an important means of ensuring the Government continues to meet its commitment to accountability and transparency and is a key political and policy touchstone.

Asking the right questions and collecting and analysing the evidence needed to answer them is at the heart of sound public policy.

The Report is also intended to raise awareness of how the lives of women and men differ. It is an annual evaluation on gender equality and gender difference in NSW.

However, it is not intended to be entirely comparative with men; indeed some of the most interesting comparisons are between groups of women.

## Who the Report is for

Women NSW 2013 is designed to be used by decision-makers in government, business and the community sector, as well as by members of the public. The information it contains will also be of interest to students, researchers and educators.

This Report provides basic information that public and private sector organisations need to develop policies and take action on issues concerning women. This and future reports will allow the tracking of progress over time.

The Report presents a range of contrast and comparisons, but it does not offer definitive conclusions as to the reasons behind them. This would require in-depth research and statistical analysis that are better provided by specialist agencies and research centres, as needed.

The facts and figures in this Report are as relevant to men as they are to women. The issues they highlight concern both sexes, and, inevitably, any change they drive will affect us all.

## Scope and structure of the Report

The Report is structured around five topics that are central to women's life experiences. These are:

- Health and wellbeing
- Education and learning
- Work and financial security
- Leadership
- Safety and justice.

In addition, a demographic profile of NSW women (Chapter 1) describes current trends in women's age, fertility, family and household arrangements and highlights the diversity of the NSW female population.

Key statistics, descriptive analysis and a focus topic of interest are presented for each topic.

Sources where the reader can find more information are given in the text and in the References at the end of the Report. Where possible, the information presented has four dimensions which are summarised in the box on page 12.

# Introduction

The gender difference	Women's status compared to men
Trends over time	The direction and pace of progress in gender equality
How does NSW compare?	Contrasting NSW and Australian women's experiences
Tracking subgroups of women	Comparing specific groups of NSW women (for example, Aboriginal, rural and regional women, women from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, specific age groups and women with a disability)

The Report does not deal with government achievements or program outcomes. However, its topics and indicators are aligned to the Government's commitments to the people of NSW through *NSW 2021, the State Plan*.

## Gender indicators

There is a large suite of indicators and data sources that could be included in a report on women. A set aiming to meet Government and community needs and to align with other global and national series was chosen for the first *Women in NSW* Report in 2012.

Since then, continuing consultation has led to the addition of certain new indicators and modification of others. The lack of regularly collected, high quality data has meant that we could not include all topics suggested by stakeholders. But where possible, we have responded to the feedback of those using the Report in order to ensure ongoing improvement in its quality and usefulness.

To assist in reading the Report, please note:

- The alignment between the Report's indicators and *NSW 2021, the State Plan* is described at the beginning of each chapter.
- Where data is available, NSW women's experience is compared to the national ABS gender indicators series, *Gender Indicators, Australia* (in the Appendix).
- Linkages with national and international gender scorecards are highlighted in each chapter.
- In each topic, readers are referred to websites where additional data and information can be found.

Eight criteria<sup>1</sup> were used to select leading indicators (see table on page 13).

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of these criteria see World Health Organisation (2003) *Comparative Evaluation of Indicators for Gender Equity and Health*, WHO Centre for Health Development, Kobe, Japan; and Productivity Commission (2011) *Report on Government Services*, Chapter One.

## Data sources and analysis

The Report seeks to bring a range of information together in an easy-to-use format. It draws on:

- Published and unpublished large-scale survey data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).
- Data from national specialist surveys, in particular the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA) longitudinal survey.
- Government administrative data that is associated with a specific program (for example, the Higher School Certificate, workers' compensation or Commonwealth Rent Assistance).
- NSW Government survey data that is published but may not be well-known to a broad audience (for example, the *NSW Adult Population Health Survey*).

While administrative data associated with service use should not be taken to be representative of a problem or issue, it can shed light on important topics. Where possible, data from different sources is presented to provide the reader with a balanced picture.

This choice is consistent with the NSW Government's commitment to honest, transparent and accountable government as described in Goal 31 of *NSW 2021, the State Plan*.

# Introduction

## Gender indicators – selection criteria

1. Worth measuring	Relevant to government policies and services
2. Gender sensitive	They identify significant gender gaps at a point in time, and over time
3. Information can galvanise action	They inform areas that are responsive to policy or program changes
4. Understandable	The data is accessible and clear to a broad audience so that the community can come to its own judgements about its meaning
5. Comparable	Comparable data is available across jurisdictions and over time
6. Can be measured for diverse populations	They facilitate comparison between different groups of women
7. Accurate	The information published is of sufficient accuracy so that the community can have confidence in it
8. Administratively simple	They are already in use within the NSW Government or are easy to produce from established data.

Clearly, it is not always possible to utilise all these criteria to select an indicator but as many as possible have been considered for each indicator.

Census 2011 data (published by the ABS in 2012) has been used for the first time in this year's Report. This makes it possible to offer more analysis about subgroups of women (for example, Aboriginal women and women from different birthplace and language groups) and to track changes between census periods. Note that all data used in the Report has been derived using the ABS product, TableBuilder Pro.

Readers should note that in some places data used in 2012 has been revised slightly where it is referred to in this year's Report. This is either because the agency generating the data has revised it; because a slightly different data series has been used (eg trend rather than original data); to rectify a rounding or other error or because the data has been updated (eg presented in today's dollars).

Usually in the Report, numbers are presented to one decimal point where numbers are less than 10, rounded to the nearest five for figures less than 100, nearest 10 for figures up to 1,000 and to the nearest 100 after that.

## Using this Report

This second report improves on the first women's annual report published in 2012.

Consultations with government agencies, peak organisations and other external stakeholders has led to the inclusion of new indicators relating to childcare arrangements, workplace flexibility, women in university and TAFE NSW leadership, business ownership, prisoners, offenders and sex discrimination at work.

Women NSW will continue to consult to ensure the Report is of use to those involved in policy development, service delivery and advocacy more generally.

Women NSW also identifies issues for the NSW Government's data development agenda where additional sex-disaggregated data may be needed.