Key Highlights from Year One

Delivery of the First Action Plan is well underway

Year one of the First Action Plan 2017-19 under the ACT Women’s Plan 2016-26 concluded in March 2018. The ambitious First Action Plan has committed to deliver one hundred actions over three years.

We are happy to report that of the forty four actions allocated to year one, over ninety five per cent have been completed or are underway. Work will continue to deliver the remaining actions over the coming months. The ACT Government has also taken significant steps in achieving the implementation of year two of the First Action Plan, with around a quarter of the fifty six year two actions also underway.

Further details on the status of individual year one actions is available in the: First Action Plan –Detailed Year One Reporting.

Funding boost for the ACT Women’s Plan

The ACT Women’s Plan is a crucial step in achieving the full and equal participation of women and girls in all aspects of our community. The ACT Government’s ongoing commitment to this plan and their leadership in advancing the status of women at work and in our community can be seen in the upcoming budget commitment to invest an additional $696,000 to implement actions under the ACT Women’s Plan and to promote gender equality more broadly.

The Canberra community has long led the nation on equality and inclusiveness for women and other communities who face barriers to full inclusion. This new investment will support the Office for Women to continue our work with each and every government directorate to drive and deliver the commitments identified under the ACT Women’s Plan.
Some key highlights from year one

Year one of the *First Action Plan* saw the implementation of many important achievements to improve the health, wellbeing and inclusion of ACT women and girls, including:

**Bringing Government and community together to promote a culture of respect and equal opportunity**

The ACT Office for Women hosted two forums to engage with women, community organisations and business representatives. These events provided an opportunity for women’s voices to be heard.

The first forum, The Case for Change was held in October 2017 and was co-hosted by YWCA Canberra. The second forum, Sharing Stories of Success was held in February 2018 and was co-hosted by the Ministerial Advisory Council for Women.

**Promoting mental health and wellbeing of women and girls**

The Australian National University will shortly be releasing a report, funded by the ACT Office for Women, on the current and emerging mental health issues for young women and girls in the ACT.

Additionally, a Gender Equity Advisory Group has been convened to research the extent to which gender perception in schools impacts on the welling of female students. This research will help inform our future policy thinking and the delivery of year two actions under the Women’s Plan.
Promoting safe places and events

The Women’s Safety Audit toolkit was reviewed and updated to make it more fit for purpose and improve its access via the Community Services Directorate website. The Office for Women has actively promoted the use of Women’s Safety Audits at all ACT Government events including Floriade, Enlighten and the National Multicultural Festival. The toolkit is also now available and encouraged for use at ACT community events including those that are privately run.

Ensuring the needs of women are considered in housing and homelessness support

The inaugural Housing and Homelessness Summit was held on 17 October 2017. It brought together 200 people with various expertise and perspectives, including representatives from industry, the housing and community sector, public housing tenants and people with lived experience of homelessness.

This diverse range of participants were asked to consider and generate new ideas to tackle housing affordability and homelessness in the ACT, including considering the specific issues faced by women in this space. Feedback from the Summit will help to guide and inform the actions recommended to government in a new ACT Housing Strategy, which is under development.

Promoting and supporting greater engagement of women and girls in sport

Active Canberra has established a partnership with Her Canberra to deliver Her Canberra Active, committing $100,000 over four years. This online portal was launched in October 2017 and connects a large network of Canberra women and girls with articles related to sport and physical activity, event information and a directory of activity opportunities.

Female friendly infrastructure guidelines have now been finalised to support the development of new, and modification of existing, facilities to better support the needs of female participants.

Sporting organisations under triennial funding agreements with the ACT Government have been asked to commit to 40 per cent representation of women on their boards by 2020.
Vocational and Educational Training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

CIT conducts ongoing promotional activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to enter training such as development of promotional materials and offering program and career advice through community events and social gatherings.

CIT has been providing access to Adjunct Child Care on campus, counselling through Relationships Australia and CIT Counsellors, support to understand Indigenous Human Rights, access to Women’s Legal Service and other services for women, including refuges who are currently studying at CIT. Women are also included in gatherings in planning for their pathways as well as programs at Yurauna. Women participated in a digital story project ‘My Story, My Voice’ in collaboration with Photo Access.

Supporting women and girls in non-traditional trades

Approximately $500,000 will be made available in grants on a competitive basis over three years under the Women in Trades Grants Program to support a small number of highly targeted projects that support women in non-traditional trades.

The ACT Emergency Services Agency, through the Women in Emergency Services Strategy has been focusing on attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining women. As part of the Strategy, there has been a focus on recruiting more women through the ACT Fire and Rescue community based recruitment processes. Thirty-four new firefighters have been employed since June 2016, with nearly a quarter being women. This is a great first step towards the 50:50 gender balance target the government has set itself in this area.
Promoting the health of women from diverse backgrounds

The ACT Government undertook research and consultation with community champions to better understand the ACT Health Community Profiles and health needs of women from diverse backgrounds.

As a result of this engagement, ACT Health has completed twelve Community Cultural Profiles. The profiles will assist health care workers better understand and appreciate possible cultural impacts on health in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Promoting Respect and Equity in the Workplace

The ACT Government is committed to promoting gender equality in the ACT Public Service and across the broader community. Informed by international best practice a range of options of procurement practices that encourage organisations to develop gender equity strategies and implement processes to promote equal opportunity were scoped. The ACT Government has committed to establishing a broad professional services panel that will consider a range of procurement criteria, including assessing service providers’ commitments to gender equality. We are also working to promote gender equity strategies, and awareness of unconscious bias through the provision of resources, tools and support.

Additionally, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has engaged the ACT Human Rights Commission to develop and implement the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Contact Officer Training Program for their RED Contact Officers to ensure they have the skills to identify and respond to workplace discrimination and sexual harassment.

Facilitating learning through the delivery of specific community based programs

Libraries ACT provided a range of community learning programs promoting social inclusion and the development of life skills, including topics such as legal aid, emotional intelligence, taking charge of your health, time management and organisation, technology, training and mindfulness.
Through a partnership with Global Sisters funding was provided for a project to support women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to develop a pathway to employment. An International Women's Day project was delivered, where a local street artist delivered workshops to 30 women to create a collaborative mixed media mural at the Centre point Building wall in Civic.