

2024

ACT LABOR'S **PLAN FOR WOMEN**





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Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for women

Labor will always stand for the rights and advancement of women.

For decades, Labor has been driving change to ensure women and girls have equal opportunities and equal rights.

In the last term of Government, Labor improved access to health services, supported women with their employment and protected the safety of women and girls in the ACT.

We made surgical and medical abortions free, removing financial barriers for people seeking an abortion in the ACT.

We made record investments into frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services, including specialist perpetrator behaviour-change programs, and programs to support children and young people.

We rolled out free three-year-old preschool, helping children get the best start to their learning and helping parents get back to work.

We know there is more to do, and Labor is committed to ensuring that women in the ACT are empowered, supported, and given the opportunity to thrive in all areas of life.

Our Women's Plan outlines how we will continue to address health, economic and safety needs of women in the ACT.

It's a comprehensive strategy to promote gender equality and support women across our community.

It's all part of our practical, progressive and proven plan for Canberra.

WOMEN'S SAFETY AND SECURITY

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy

Every person should feel safe in their relationship, home and community. Labor is committed to delivering a comprehensive and evidence-based strategy to end domestic, family and sexual violence in Canberra.

We will work with our community sector partners to co-design an ambitious plan that will help to inform future investment and enable the sector and government to better plan and target initiatives where they are most needed.

Improving Women's Safety

We will continue to design new public spaces and improve existing ones to ensure they are inclusive, accessible and safe for everyone. In particular women, girls, gender diverse and other vulnerable people. This includes improved lighting, better connections to public transport and improved public facilities.

We will also work with the community sector to explore ways to measure how safe women feel in areas across the ACT.

This will help us to identify areas that need to be improved so women feel safe when moving about their community.

Housing and Homelessness

On top of continuing the ACT Government's record investments in homelessness services, ACT Labor will invest an additional \$5 million to target chronic homelessness, youth homelessness,

older women and those escaping domestic violence.

A re-elected Labor government will also make 75 public housing properties available for specialist housing and homelessness services, including to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Women's Health Strategy

In consultation with the community and health sectors, we will develop a comprehensive Women's Health Strategy that addresses key health concerns for women, including menstruation, menopause, and reproductive health.

Tackling period poverty

We will expand the rollout of free period products across schools, sports pavilions, libraries, and health facilities to ensure women and girls have access to these essential products.

Expanded Women's Health Services

We will expand the Women's Health Service to more locations across the ACT, so women can access the care they need, closer to home. These services are run by women, for women and provide dedicated health care in a supportive and safe environment.

Services include full health checks, cervical screening, support during menopause, nutrition advice and counselling.

Easier access to UTI treatments

We will expand the scope of the existing Community Pharmacy trial to all ACT community pharmacies. This will provide faster and easier access to treatment for uncomplicated UTIs and the resupply for selected oral contraceptive pills.

New Breast Cancer Clinic

A re-elected Labor Government will establish a high-risk breast cancer clinic at the North Canberra Hospital. We will work with clinicians, researchers, specialists, consumers and advocates to design the clinic and its services.

This will ensure Canberrans who are at high risk of breast cancers will have better access to specialised screening, treatment and support services.

Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain

Labor will also expand gynaecological services in the ACT, so more women can access specialist care.

We will hire more nurses and allied health workers at the Canberra Endometriosis Centre and continue our focus on hiring more specialists. The Canberra Endometriosis Centre will work with the new pelvic pain clinic at Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, primary care providers and private specialists to better coordinate patient care.

This will help to reduce wait times, deliver more services and ensure women experiencing endometriosis and pelvic pain get the care they need.

We will continue to support the health workforce with training and development

to identify and treat concerns that overwhelmingly impact women. This includes training on pelvic pain, ovarian cysts and endometriosis.

Maternity services

As part of our commitment to hire 800 health workers in the next term, we will hire more midwives and expand the continuity of care program across the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children and the North Canberra Hospital.

This means more women and pregnant people will be provided consistent care by the same team of midwives.

Perinatal support

To provide specialist services for parents experiencing perinatal mental illness, we will also establish a 6-bed perinatal mental health residential unit and open a peer-supported safe space in a community setting.

As part of our plan, Labor will also:

- Co-design a second early pregnancy unit and Birth Centre as part of the new Northside Hospital
- Pilot a birth companion program at the Canberra Hospital
- Work with Winnunga Nimmityjah and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to establish a Birthing on Country program for First Nations families
- Continue to participate in the Whole Nine Months public health campaign to reduce the rate of preterm births
- Establish a low-cost public IVF service. A scoping study is underway and if re-elected we will continue to explore options for making fertility treatment more affordable

FAMILIES

Baby Bundles

We know that the first weeks and months after birth can be a special but stressful time for young families. That's why Labor will partner with Roundabout Canberra to provide a Baby Bundle to babies born to first time parents.

The Bundles will include essential items and information to support the safety, health and wellbeing of a newborn and their family. We will work with Roundabout to provide other essential items to the families who need it most.

Free preschool for three-year-olds

A re-elected Labor Government will double the three-year-old preschool program. It will mean that every three-year-old child in Canberra will be able to access 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year, of free early learning. This will save the average family over \$2,600 per child.

After hours care

To support families balance work and preschool, we will expand the hours of care available at our public preschools.

A re-elected Labor Government will work with the sector to roll out supervised before and after preschool care at public four-year-old preschools, taking pressure off thousands of working families.

More support for young families

Adjusting to a new baby is a very challenging time and it can have a significant impact on the mental health of parents. To support to local families, a re-elected Labor Government will increase access to evidence-based prenatal and postnatal parenting programs and playgroups.

These programs will aim to increase support beyond parents with a first child to parents with diverse needs, parents with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse families.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Encouraging women into construction

Increasing women's participation in male dominated industries is a key priority for Labor. We will expand the try-a-trade program to support and encourage more women to engage in trade qualifications.

We will implement the Women in Construction policy to increase job opportunities for women and reduce gender bias and gender segregation in the construction industry.

Increased funding for elite women's sport

We will increase funding for local women's elite sporting teams, including the UC Capitals, CBR United, the ACT Meteors, Canberra Chill and the Canberra Heat. This will strengthen elite women's sport in the ACT and provide more opportunities for women and girls to participate in sports.

Coaching and refereeing scholarship program

To increase women leadership roles in community sport, we will provide grants to support more women becoming umpires, coaches and officials of sporting teams or codes.

Female-Friendly Sports Facilities

We will complete the upgrade of all remaining sportsgrounds with female-friendly bathrooms and changerooms, ensuring equitable access for women across the ACT.

Gender-Responsive Budget

Continuing our efforts on gender-responsive budgeting, we will ensure that public spending prioritises gender equality and addresses the needs of women across all areas of government.



Authorised by Ash van Dijk for ACT Labor.