

TPG23-27 Policy and Guidelines: Gender Impact Assessment Policy

TPG23-27

1 October 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Australia, and the oldest continuing culture in human history.

We pay respect to Elders past and present and commit to respecting the lands we walk on, and the communities we walk with.

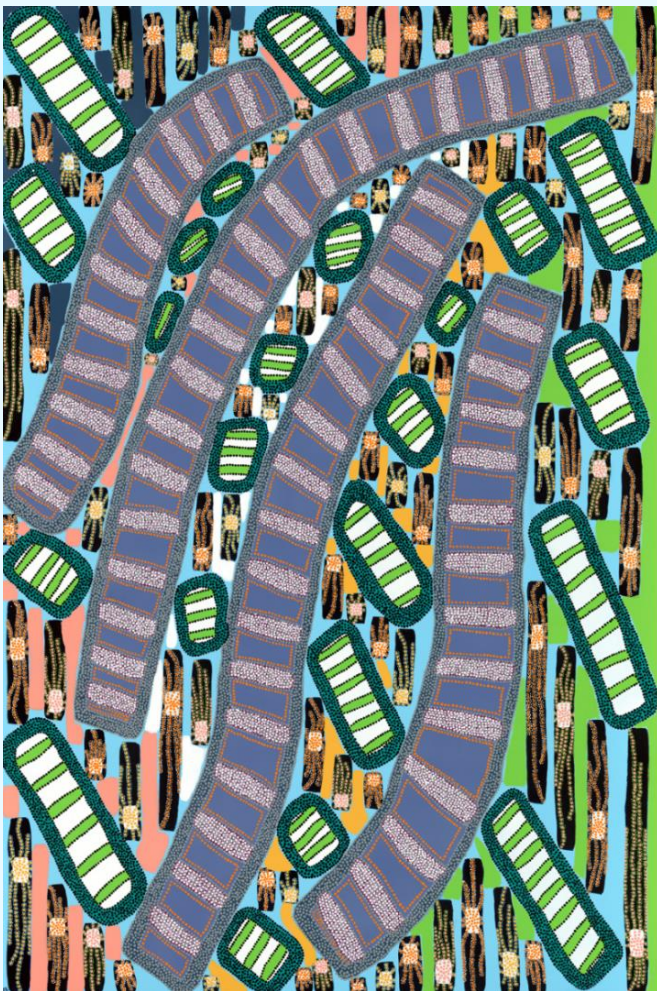
We celebrate the deep and enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country and acknowledge their continuing custodianship of the land, seas and sky.

We acknowledge the ongoing stewardship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the important contribution they make to our communities and economies.

We reflect on the continuing impact of government policies and practices, and recognise our responsibility to work together with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities, towards improved economic, social and cultural outcomes.

Artwork:

Regeneration by Josie Rose



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Key information	
Treasury Policy and Guidelines (TPG) is relevant to?	<input type="checkbox"/> GSF Agencies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Government Sector <input type="checkbox"/> Public non-financial corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Public financial corporation <input type="checkbox"/> State Owned Corporations <input type="checkbox"/> Other
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1.0	December 2023	Women's Economic Outcomes	Treasurer	First draft of the policy
2.0	September 2024	Women's Economic Outcomes	Secretary	Revised policy, including an updated template

Gender Impact Assessment Policy

Purpose

The Gender Impact Assessment Policy provides guidance to general government sector (GGS) agencies on when and how to complete gender impact assessments for new policy proposals (NPPs).

The Gender Impact Assessment Policy comes into effect on 1 October 2024.

Overview

All GGS agencies are required to prepare gender impact assessments for NPPs (unless exempt). This recognises the important role the NSW Government plays in ensuring the needs of all genders are understood and addressed in the development of public policy.

Gender impact assessments support the NSW Government to make better-informed and equitable decisions when designing policy and allocating resources to meet the needs of the people it serves. Gender impact assessments can also improve the design of new policies to ensure the needs of different cohorts are not inadvertently overlooked.

Summary of Requirements

Mandatory

1. GGS agencies are required to complete gender impact assessments for all NPPs over \$10 million (over the budget and forward estimates for recurrent expenditure and estimated total cost for capital expenditure), unless the proposal meets the exemption criteria detailed in this document.

What is a gender impact assessment?

Gender impact assessments consider how a proposed policy, program or project may have different impacts on people based on their gender – this includes women, men and gender diverse people. The assessments aim to provide decision makers with analysis on the gendered impacts of proposals to inform resource allocation decisions. The assessments can also improve the outcome of government interventions by embedding gender equality considerations into policy design and implementation.

Objectives of gender impact assessments

Gender impact assessments are designed to:

- support better informed decisions in public policy resource allocation
- highlight how women, men or gender diverse people may have different needs from policies, programs and projects due to their gender
- challenge the perpetuation of gender norms within policy decisions
- avoid negative impacts arising from gender-neutral/gender-blind policy decisions.

Why gender impact assessments are needed

While public policy may be gender-neutral in design, its real-life application can have different consequences for people due to their gender. Women, men and gender diverse people may have different needs, life experiences and access to resources which can result in an initiative impacting them positively or negatively.

Structural gender inequalities, such as the gender pay gap and uneven division of caring responsibilities, also shape how people (in particular women) experience public policy. Policymakers may inadvertently reinforce gender inequalities if the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people are not recognised and addressed when designing policy solutions.

While gender impact assessments traditionally compare the experiences of women to men, it is important that people of all genders are considered as part of the assessment. Where available, data and other studies should be used to understand the experiences of gender diverse people and their use of services, and opportunities to collect additional information on the experiences of this cohort should be explored. It is acknowledged that until adequate data on gender diverse people is collected, most gender impact assessments will likely focus on the experiences of women and men.

Where possible, gender impact assessments should also highlight how intersecting aspects of a person's identity including First Nations identity, cultural and racial background, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability and age, affect the way they experience a proposed initiative.

For example, women as a group benefit from initiatives focused on reducing domestic and family violence, as women are more likely to be victim-survivors compared to men.¹ However, data shows that First Nations women are three times more likely to be victims of domestic and family violence

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023, *Personal Safety, Australia*, 2021-22 financial year.

than non-Indigenous women.² As such, the development of new policies, programs and projects in this area should take into consideration the particular needs of First Nations women, compared to non-Indigenous women, to design effective and culturally safe solutions.

The process of undertaking a gender impact assessment recognises that policy decisions are not inherently gender-neutral and unconscious policy choices may inadvertently create negative outcomes and further entrench disadvantage. An example of this emerges from the application of a gender impact assessment on snow-clearing practices in Sweden.³

EXAMPLE GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT: SNOW-CLEARING

In 2011, the snow-clearing schedule in the Swedish town of Karlskoga came under scrutiny as officials were tasked with re-evaluating their policies through a gendered lens. The practice at the time was to clear snow from major traffic arteries first before clearing pedestrian walkways and bike paths. On the surface, the snow-clearing schedule was gender-neutral but closer analysis revealed that it was affecting women and men differently.

The gender impact assessment found women were more likely than men to walk, cycle or take public transport, while men were more likely to drive. Data from Northern Sweden hospital admissions also indicated that pedestrians were injured three times as often as motorists in slippery or icy conditions. In light of this analysis, the town councillors of Karlskoga adjusted the schedule to clear walkways and bike paths before roads – a simple change that did not require additional resources. As a result of this switch, pedestrian injuries fell.

By undertaking a gender impact assessment and identifying differences in how men and women experienced a ‘gender-neutral’ policy, Swedish officials were able to save healthcare and productivity costs arising from pedestrian injuries. Gender impact assessments can support policymakers to uncover the costs and benefits associated with ‘gender-blind’ or ‘gender neutral’ policies.

² NSW Treasury 2023, First Nations Women’s Economic Participation Review: Pathways to Prosperity.

³ Caroline Criado Perez 2019, *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*, Abrams Press.

When is a gender impact assessment required?

The NSW Government requires GGS agencies to produce gender impact assessments for all NPPs over \$10 million, unless the proposal meets one of the exemption criteria outlined below.

The \$10 million threshold is based on the budget and forward estimates for recurrent expenditure and estimated total cost for capital expenditure.

EXEMPTION CRITERIA FOR GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Agencies are not required to complete gender impact assessments for NPPs that meet any of the following criteria:

- **The NPP funds the upgrade, maintenance, or replacement of equipment, including information and communications technology (ICT).**
Example: An agency seeks \$11 million for the upgrade of prisoner transport vehicles.
- **The NPP adjusts an agency's capital planning limit.**
Example: An agency seeks to offset its capital planning limit to support its capital strategy.
- **The NPP funds the acquisition of land.**
Example: An agency seeks \$190 million to acquire surplus government owned land for the construction of business hubs.
- **The NPP funds the upgrade, maintenance or replacement of existing infrastructure. This does not include NPPs funding new capital projects.**
Example: An agency seeks \$44 million to upgrade an intersection on a major highway.
- **The NPP funds the initial response to a natural disaster. This does not include subsequent funding decisions in relation to natural disaster responses.**
Example: An agency seeks \$205 million for targeted assistance in immediate response to a flooding event.

Gender impact assessments are not required for parameter and technical adjustments (PTAs).

Agencies are encouraged, but not required, to complete gender impact assessments for all NPPs under \$10 million. Treasury may request agencies to undertake a gender impact assessment for NPPs under the \$10 million threshold, where appropriate. This approach may assist in improving the design of new policies to ensure the needs of different cohorts are not inadvertently overlooked.

There may be NPPs that do not meet the exemption criteria above but would not benefit from a gender impact assessment. If this is the case, please contact the Women's Economic Outcomes team at womenseconomicoutcomes@treasury.nsw.gov.au to request an exemption.

How to complete a gender impact assessment

This policy establishes principles to guide gender impact assessments, recognising that agencies have different core functions, processes and internal requirements which shape how new policies, programs and projects are developed. Agencies should apply these principles to the development of gender impact assessments as appropriate.

Guiding principles for gender impact assessments

1. Understand how economic, social, health, wellbeing and transport needs and experiences can differ for women, men and gender diverse people.
2. Recognise how intersecting aspects of a person's identity including First Nations identity, cultural and racial background, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability and age, influence how women, men and gender diverse people experience public policy initiatives.
3. Identify the potential impacts of a proposed policy, program or project, and how people of all genders may experience these differently, particularly women or gender diverse people.
4. Determine if the policy, program or project will disrupt or reinforce gender norms.
5. Consider how a planned course of action can be adjusted or discontinued, if potential negative gendered impacts are identified.

Applying a gender lens to policy development

For the 2025-26 Budget onwards, agencies will be required to complete gender impact assessments on all NPPs over \$10 million, unless exempt. To meet this requirement, agencies should begin applying a gender lens to the development of new policies, programs and projects as early as practical.

This will support more gender-equal interventions and enable agencies to prepare high-quality gender impact assessments. Insights from gender impact assessments will promote better-informed government decision-making and resource allocation.

To apply a gender lens when developing an NPP, agencies should consider the following steps. While these steps are not mandatory and may not apply for all NPPs, they will assist agencies when preparing their gender impact assessments.

- **Identify how women, men or gender diverse people are affected by the issue you are seeking to solve.** Clarify assumptions about the causes of the issue you are seeking to solve, and which cohorts are most affected.
- **Source gender-disaggregated data relating to the issue, where available.** Outside of your agency, good sources for gender disaggregated information include the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and Workplace Gender Equality Agency. If domestic datasets are not available, international research could be considered, where relevant to the Australian context. This process should identify any gaps in existing datasets and evidence, and how the proposal could help fill these gaps (particularly for women and gender diverse people).

- **Use insights from gender-disaggregated data to inform the development of the new policy, program or project.** Based on your research, identify how access to resources, use of services, representation in decision-making and leadership positions, caring responsibilities and life experiences may differ based on gender and intersecting identities. How can this policy, program or project be designed to be responsive to their different needs?
- **Consult with stakeholders to ensure a diverse range of voices are heard and explore whether the proposal may have unintended negative consequences, particularly for women or gender diverse people.** Peak bodies, non-government organisations, councils and universities may provide additional insight on any potential gendered impacts of the proposal.
- **Identify whether there are opportunities to ensure diverse gender representation in governance and other decision-making bodies related to the proposal.** For example, consider the gender diversity of any expert panels, working groups, steering committees or other decision-making bodies that may be established through the proposal.
- **Consider alternative options if potential negative gendered impacts are identified.** What changes can be made to mitigate or minimise negative impacts on social and economic outcomes, particularly for women and gender diverse people? Are there opportunities for this policy, program or project to strengthen gender equality? If women or gender diverse people do not benefit from this initiative, identify the reasons behind this.
- **Identify whether procurement and sourcing strategies provide opportunities to support women's workforce participation and promote gender equality.** For example, consider any opportunities to source goods or services from businesses that support gender equitable participation in their workplace (demonstrated by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's Employer of Choice citation).
- **Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan, if not already in place.** Many policies, programs and projects will have established processes for measuring impacts on the target cohort(s). What monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken for this proposal? How will you know if the proposal has had the anticipated gendered impacts (if any)? Any gender-disaggregated data collected as part of this proposal should be used for monitoring and evaluation. For more information, see [TPG22-22 Policy and Guidelines: Evaluation](#).

EXAMPLE GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT: VACCINE COVERAGE FOR HESITANT AND HARD-TO-REACH COMMUNITIES

2024-25 NSW Budget

The NSW Government is investing \$15 million in vaccine coverage for hesitant and hard-to-reach communities. This program promotes vaccine uptake in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, recognising that immunisation coverage varies across the NSW population.

A gender impact assessment of this program highlighted several gender-related barriers to immunisation. For example, religious practices or cultural values may prevent female caregivers from seeking immunisation services from male health workers. Additionally, travelling long distances to health clinics may deter women, particularly young mothers, from bringing children for immunisation.

The analysis identified that vaccine champions can assist in overcoming gender-based barriers to women and children's immunisation. Vaccine champions who can speak community languages can increase vaccination uptake by promoting accessible immunisation services from female health care workers, finding more geographically accessible immunisation service locations, and providing culturally sensitive health care providers.

The gender impact assessment also identified an opportunity to collect qualitative data from vaccine champions on gender-specific barriers to immunisation within culturally and linguistically diverse communities across New South Wales.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

My NPP is gender neutral. Why should I complete a gender impact assessment?

While a policy proposal might appear gender neutral on the surface, it can inadvertently reinforce gender inequalities or overlook the specific needs of people due to their gender. For instance, investment in a new bike path may appear gender neutral as it benefits all users in the community, regardless of gender. However, women may have additional safety concerns such as the need for better lighting and exit points along the path.

Gender impact assessments can help challenge assumptions that all people will benefit from new proposals in the same way and highlight instances where the needs of different genders should be considered in policy design.

NSW Treasury will consider gender impact assessments as part of the evidence base for NPPs. Where practical, gender analysis will be incorporated in information provided to ERC, such as Treasury advice or agency submissions, to inform decision-making.

Are gender impact assessments only required for NSW Budget proposals?

Yes. Proposals outside the NSW Budget process do not require gender impact assessments but agencies are encouraged to apply a gender lens to other processes, where appropriate, including procurement, expenditure reviews and grants.

It is important to note that funding decisions must be considered in the budget process by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet, unless considered strictly urgent and unavoidable, unforeseeable at the time of the budget, and cannot be accommodated within existing resources.

Are gender impact assessments required for parameter and technical adjustments or carry forwards?

No. Gender impact assessments are required for NPPs only.

Are gender impact assessments required for NPPs under \$10 million?

No. However, agencies are strongly encouraged to complete gender impact assessments for NPPs under \$10 million, particularly for proposals that clearly require gender-based considerations.

I have completed a First Nations impact assessment for my NPP and addressed the impact on gender there. Do I still need to complete a gender impact assessment?

Yes, if the proposal satisfies the eligibility criteria for both the gender impact assessment and the First Nations impact assessment, you are required to complete both. The impact assessment processes are separate and have a different focus.

- The gender impact assessment considers new policy proposals from a gender lens, focusing on how the proposed policy, program or project may have different impacts on people based on their gender.
- A First Nations impact assessment is specifically tailored towards understanding the unique impacts of the proposal on First Nations communities.

There may be some duplication in the responses where there is overlap between gender and First Nations lenses, as both impact assessments encourage an intersectional approach. However, the answers provided in the gender impact assessment can be referenced in the First Nations impact assessment and vice versa to avoid duplication.

Are separate gender impact assessments required for each component of a proposal that includes multiple initiatives?

No, one gender impact assessment can be completed for the proposal. Analysis can be included within the gender impact assessment on the individual initiatives within a proposal. There is guidance available on the NSW Treasury website on how to complete a gender impact assessment for proposals that contain multiple initiatives.

How will gender impact assessments be funded?

Conducting a gender impact assessment forms part of good policy development. There are no additional resources available for agencies to complete gender impact assessments.

Can my gender impact assessment be included in the business case?

Yes. Gender impact assessments can be included as an attachment to business cases and referenced within the contents of a business case.

What is the difference between gender impact assessments and distributional analysis?

Distributional analysis disaggregates the overall impacts of an initiative (and its various options) to indicate which groups bear costs or receive benefits.

While distributional analysis focuses on the outcome of an initiative, gender impact assessments focus on the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people to improve the design of government policy and programs to be effective in achieving the intended outcome. A gender impact assessment is a qualitative assessment that complements, but does not duplicate, distributional analysis.

Analysis conducted in a gender impact assessment may help inform the distributional analysis conducted in a business case.

NSW Treasury will consider gender impact assessments as part of the evidence base for NPPs. Where practical, gender analysis will be incorporated in information provided to ERC, such as Treasury advice or agency submissions, to inform decision-making.

Will gender impact assessments be published?

Potentially, if the proposal is supported by the NSW Government. Some case studies of gender impact assessments may be published in a *Gender Equality Budget Statement*. Examples can be found in the [2024-25 Gender Equality Budget Statement](#). Selected case studies will be discussed and developed with the agency owners of the proposal.

Proposals that are not supported remain Cabinet-in-Confidence and their gender impact assessments will not be published.

Where can I find additional guidance to complete my gender impact assessment?

A resource hub is available on the NSW Treasury website with tools, templates, training materials and resources, including example gender impact assessments. New content will be added on an ongoing basis.

Appendix A: Gender Impact Assessment Template


INSTRUCTIONS

- Complete questions 1 to 6 and the Summary at the end.
- Provide links to any sources or data you are referencing,
- Consider intersectional perspectives in your responses. If you are completing a First Nations impact assessment which contains relevant analysis on First Nations women, you can refer to the First Nations impact assessment in this document to avoid duplication.
- Include findings in the business case, including in the distributional analysis (if applicable).
- Submit the completed gender impact assessment to your Treasury Relationship Lead as an attachment to the New Policy Proposal.


Portfolio / Agency	
Proposal Name	
Contact	<i>Name, position, email, and phone</i>
Short description of the proposal	<i>(max. 100 words)</i>
Amount being sought	<i>Provide the estimated total cost for capital expenditure and cost over the budget and forward estimates for recurrent expenditure.</i>

Analysing the gendered impact of the proposal

1. How does **the issue** you are seeking to address affect women, men or gender diverse people differently?

 *Tip: This question is about the problem you are trying to solve. Consider if some groups are disproportionately affected by the issue you are seeking to address, or if people have different needs due to their gender (including intersectional characteristics as appropriate).*

2. What are the expected positive impacts of **the proposal** on women, men or gender diverse people?

 *Tip: Consider the design of the proposal and how it may benefit people differently due to their gender. Think about the positive impacts along the following themes:*

Economic opportunity and advancement: *Will it increase economic security of women, men or gender diverse people by promoting equal access to employment and career advancement? Consider if it will reduce the gender pay gap, engage businesses that demonstrate gender equality in their workplace, promote workforce inclusivity, or improve access to paid parental leave and flexible work arrangements for men.*


Health and wellbeing: *Will it support quality of life, safety, and the mental and physical health needs of women, men and gender diverse people? Consider if it will promote safe relationships and communities, raise awareness and understanding of the specific health needs of women/girls, men/boys and gender diverse people, provide tailored physical and mental health support, or offer housing solutions and homelessness prevention strategies.*


Participation and empowerment: *Will it challenge gender roles, stereotypes and biases? For example, does it support women, men or gender diverse people to enter jobs or industries that they previously could not access, or challenge gender norms around unpaid care? Will it involve or support businesses that demonstrate gender equality outcomes? Will it promote the political, economic or social participation or leadership of underrepresented groups? Consider if it will support women, girls and gender diverse people to take up and continue to participate in public spaces, community life and sport.*

Please use the table below or provide your response in free text, using sources or data to support your response where possible.

Theme	Positive impacts
Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	

3. How will you mitigate any risks, barriers or limitations of **the proposal** on women, men or gender diverse people?

 *Tip: Consider potential risks associated with the proposal on people of different genders, including barriers to access. What changes can you make to the design or implementation of the proposal to mitigate these impacts?*

 *Consider opportunities in leadership and decision making, organisational policies such as Gender Equality Action Plans, procurement strategies, and stakeholder engagement and consultation which could improve the proposal.*

Please use the table below or provide your response in free text.

Risks, barriers or limitations	Mitigating strategies

4. Does **the proposal** support any gender equality indicators? (Select the most relevant indicator, with a maximum of two indicators)

Economic opportunity and advancement

- Increases women’s labour force participation in NSW
- Decreases the underemployment rate for women in NSW
- Increases the number of women business owners and entrepreneurs
- Increases the skills and education levels of women and girls
- Promotes economic security of women and/or gender diverse people

Health and wellbeing

- Improves access to health care
- Increases safe and stable housing in NSW
- Supports reduction of gender-based violence, including domestic and family violence

Participation and empowerment

- Supports recovery and resilience after natural disasters
- Promotes the sharing of unpaid care and responsibilities
- Improves access to quality early childhood education and care
- Increases diverse gender representation in under-represented industries and sectors


- Increases diverse gender representation in decision making and leadership
- Increases safety in workplaces and / or public spaces
- Eliminates gender stereotypes and roles

Other


- Not applicable
- Other: [Provide proposed gender equality indicator]


Building the evidence base

5. What are the knowledge gaps about the gendered impacts of this issue?

 *Tip: This question is about identifying any gaps in research or disaggregated data for the issue you are seeking to address. If possible, how could the proposal help address this knowledge gap?*

6. How will you collect data to monitor and/or evaluate the gendered impacts of the proposal?

 *Tip: Treasury has a [NSW Evaluation Policy and Guidelines](#), which sets out best practice advice for agencies and evaluators to consider when scheduling, planning and undertaking evaluations.*

 *Tip: Evaluations or progress updates on the gendered impacts of the proposal can be included in your Department's Gender Equality Action Plan annual report.*

Please select the actions you will undertake to monitor and/or evaluate the gendered impacts of the proposal and include in your evaluation plan (where applicable).

- Collect gender disaggregated data
- Source case studies from participants of different genders
- Develop gender-specific indicators (qualitative and / or quantitative)
- Ensure diverse gender representation in consultations and analysis
- Monitor gender equality performance of organisations engaged to supply goods or services
- Source gender expertise in the evaluation team
- Ensure interim evaluation reports identify and respond to unintended gendered outcomes
- Incorporate gender analysis in presentation of findings and recommendations
- Other: [Provide short description below]

SUMMARY OF THE GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT (max 200 words)

In your response, please address the following questions:

- *Will the proposal likely have a positive, neutral or adverse impact on gender equality?*
- *What changes have been made to the proposal as a result of the gender impact assessment?*
- *How will any gendered outcomes of the proposal be monitored?*

Glossary of terms

Gender / gender identity: One's sense of whether one is a man, woman, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, genderfluid, or a combination of one or more of these definitions.⁴

Gendered impact: Consequences that are different, positively or negatively, for affected groups of women, men or gender diverse people.

Gender norms: A subset of social norms that relate specifically to gender differences. They are informal, deeply entrenched and widely held beliefs about gender roles, power relations, standards or expectations that govern human behaviours and practices in a particular social context and at a particular time.

General government sector: The general government sector represents the scope of the NSW Budget. Agencies in this sector generally operate under the Financial Management Framework and carry out policy, regulatory and service delivery functions. Refer to the Classification of Agencies.

Intersectionality: An approach that recognises that people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors to create intersecting forms of privilege and marginalisation.⁵

New Policy Proposal (NPP): A decision by Government that involves a new initiative or discretionary change to existing policy. Refer to TPG21-11 Parameter and Technical Adjustments and New Policy Proposals (Measures).

Transgender and gender diverse: These are inclusive umbrella terms that describe people whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth.⁶

⁴ NSW Health 2022, *NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022-2027*.

⁵ UN Women 2022, Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind.

⁶ NSW Health 2022, *NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022-2027*.

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