

Gender Sensitive Urban Design Framework



ACT
Government

Gender Sensitive
Urban Design



Acknowledgment of Country

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) acknowledge that Aboriginal people are the Traditional Owners of Australia. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Ngunnawal people as the custodians of the land and waters that we live and thrive on today and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

TCCS acknowledges that Canberra's cultural and natural heritage was maintained by the Aboriginal people for many generations before colonial settlement on Australian soil. Aboriginal people's management of the land preserved the natural balance of local plants and animals.

This knowledge of the environment in which we live is critical to the protection and restoration of our land today. It is our responsibility to preserve and encourage traditional custodian family groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity. When using this document, consider opportunities to incorporate Ngunnawal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into the street planning and design of our suburbs within the ACT.

Gender Sensitive Urban Design Framework

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with


Communication Link

OCULUS

 Inhabit
Place

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Introduction

The Gender Sensitive Urban Design (GSUD) Framework and Toolkit (the 'Framework and Toolkit') is a profoundly positive step forward in setting the highest benchmarks for public spaces; ones that are equitable, inclusive, accessible, and safe for everyone, in particular women, girls, gender diverse and other vulnerable people.

Delivering a GSUD Framework and Toolkit was identified as an action in the **ACT Women's Plan 2016-26**¹. The plan sets out a ten-year strategy to ensure the ACT community values and respects all women and girls, commits to gender equality and promotes and protects the rights, wellbeing and potential of all women and girls.²

The development of the Framework and Toolkit relates directly to **Objective 3: Building a community where women and girls are safe and supported to participate**. The purpose is to realise the full and equal participation of women and girls in our community by ensuring their safety at home and in public spaces as being essential ingredients to an equitable and just society.³

What is gender sensitive urban design?

Gender sensitive urban design recognises that people experience public spaces differently based on gender.

Gender is just one of a multitude of interconnected dimensions that form an individual's identity, and shape how a person is treated in society. Gender is a social and cultural concept that refers to the way a person lives and interacts with the world. It is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience as a woman, man or non-binary person. Non-binary is an umbrella term describing gender identities that are not exclusively male or female.

Urban design is the integrated practice of shaping the built environment to create neighbourhoods, towns, and cities.

At a macro scale urban design defines the structure of our neighbourhoods and cities through the definition of land use mix, density, road connectivity, public open space, infrastructure, community amenity and environmental systems. At the micro or human scale, it defines the spatial features and urban design qualities.

The products of the urban design process, including streets, infrastructure, public spaces, and buildings, directly influence the way we live, work, socialise, move and connect to other people. Consequently, urban design professionals (including engineers, landscape architects, architects, planners and policy makers) and urban design practices, play a pivotal role in shaping the social structures and behaviours that define our community.⁴

Urban design principles and practices are generally considered to be gender neutral, not distinguishing between how either men or women experience and use public space.⁵

1 ACT Women's Plan 2016 – 2026. Refer to the 'Second Action Plan 2020-2022'

2 Page 4, ACT Women's Plan 2016 – 2026. Second Action Plan 2020-2022

3 Page 14, ACT Women's Plan 2016 – 2026. Second Action Plan 2020-2022

4 Page vi, World Bank Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design, 2020

5 Page 15, Gender Issue Guide: Urban Planning and Design, 2012, UN-Habitat

However, research from all around the world, has proven that cities are not equitable, and the gender neutral one-size fits all approach to city-making often provides better urban design experiences for heterosexual, able-bodied men than it does for women, girls, gender diverse and other vulnerable people.⁶

Key contributing factors perpetuating gender inequality are embedded deep in our social fabric and require a significant shift in governance and urban design practices.

They range from unconscious biases through to the dominance of men in urban design and place management professions.

For instance, while idealistically the concept of gender neutral should not favour any gender, in practice it tends to be biased towards the male gender.⁷ Studies demonstrate that gender neutral words such as 'people', 'human' and 'person' unconsciously default to the male gender. In the context of urban design, a gender-neutral built environment is more than likely to prioritise the needs of men over women, simply because the default gender is always 'male'.

This is exacerbated by the historical dominance of men in the planning⁸, urban design, engineering⁹ and other related professions, unconsciously hard wiring male needs into urban spaces, infrastructure, and place management aspects of our cities and towns.

The combination of these factors has a negative consequence on how and the way women, gender diverse and vulnerable people experience public space – **impacting safety, accessibility, health, participation, and legitimacy.**

While not all the experiences that contribute to how a person feels in a public space can be solved by design, a gender sensitive approach will seek to understand and embrace diversity and re-address inequalities in the design of the public realm to create more inclusive and equitable environments for everyone.

For example, the look and feel of high-quality public space is known to facilitate positive social behaviour that improves vulnerable people's experiences and perceptions of safety in public spaces. This can increase their sense of belonging and willingness to fully participate in community life.

It is important to note that gender sensitive urban design is not a women's issue. It seeks to resolve inequalities and disadvantages in our urban environment, developed from biased or gendered social structures, that limit the opportunities and rights of any person, regardless of gender.

6 Saskia Sassen, *Built Gendering*, (41 F/W 2015) *Harvard Design Magazine*, [Family Planning](#).

7 Sarah Kuta, *Gender-Neutral Words Like 'People' and 'Person' Are Perceived as Male, Study Suggests*, (7 April 2022) *Smithsonian Magazine*;

8 Planning Institute of Australia: *Developing a national gender equity policy for the planning profession discussion paper* (2021)

9 Engineers Australia's Diversity and Inclusion Positioning Statement, (2020)

Why is gender sensitivity in urban design important?

Gender sensitivity in urban design is instinctively linked to safety, in particular the perception of safety. This is particularly important as **'feeling safe'**¹⁰ is ranked by Australians (and Canberrans) as the most important attribute of what makes somewhere a good place to live.

The feeling of risk and uncertainty, as well as the actual statistical risk of feeling safe, play a decisive role in whether people, in particular women, gender diverse and vulnerable people, choose to use a public space or participate in an outdoor activity.

As safety can mean different things to different people it needs to be considered in a spectrum of consequences.

A consequences diagram (Figure 1), using information gathered from consultation and place audits, explains the range of impacts of not considering women, girls, and gender diverse people in the design of our cities. The spectrum also illustrates the positive consequences of gender sensitive design.

The key benefits of adopting a gender sensitive urban design approach result in public spaces that are inclusive, feel safe and comfortable, and are well managed.

These outcomes do not exclusively benefit women or gender diverse people, but work towards creating a more liveable city for everyone.

Everyone benefits - places that are good for women are good for everyone.

¹⁰ Page 2, Life in Australia 2021- Understanding liveability across metropolitan Australia, Ipsos

Figure 1.

Consequences for not considering women, girls and gender diverse people in the design of our cities

GENDER INCLUSIVE	Positive experience safe/happy	Culturally safe / no risk	Feel safe	Happy
GENDER EQUITABLE				
GENDER SENSITIVE			Are safe	Confident
GENDER NEUTRAL	Negative experience unsafe/unhappy	Perceived threat	Precautionary behaviour	Heightened awareness / vigilance
		Harassment	Reduced participation	Lack of confidence in occupation of space
GENDER BIASED		Psychological / physical / sexual violence	Harm	Injury

Increased opportunities to participate	Increased trust and participation	Ability to move with confidence through public space	Relaxed	Social inclusion	
Strong sense of belonging	Good mental and physical health	Increased sociability and generosity	Independence	Authentic representation	
Avoid eye contact/feign busyness	Avoid being alone/ Avoid using space at night	Pre-plan route	Worry / stress	Reduced enjoyment	Reduced legitimacy
Avoidance of space	Increased reliance on others	Reduced physical health	Reduced mental health	Loss of social network	
Low self esteem	Trauma	Loss of income	Insecure tenure	Chronic pain	Death

Purpose of the Framework and Toolkit

The **GSUD Framework and Toolkit** is an evidence-based research report. It sets out expectations and guides the delivery of best-practice urban design outcomes for the public realm through a gender lens.

The project synthesises research and insights, gathered through extensive literature review, consultation and place audits, into recommendations for progressive and effective strategies tailored to the ACT context.

The GSUD Framework and Toolkit consists of two documents:

The **GSUD Framework** (this document) is a strategic document that sets out the principles to achieve gender sensitive urban places. It describes the key ideas generated from consultation, research, and analysis.

The **GSUD Toolkit** is a practical guide that examines common gender-related public realm inequalities and challenges, offering recommendations to remedy and resolve. The Toolkit can be used by practitioners and the community alike who have an interest in the places in which they live.

Applying a gender sensitive approach will assist not only urban design professionals, but also the ACT Government in understanding how different groups experience the public realm and how addressing any inequalities in the urban environment creates a better place for all.

Methodology

The project methodology was divided into four key deliverables. Each deliverable was underpinned by effective communication and engagement with the community to ensure that lessons learned were continually applied.

DELIVERABLE 1: Literature Review

Our research aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding and contemporary knowledge of gender sensitivity, and to uncover successful examples and how they might be applied in the design of public places and infrastructure.

DELIVERABLE 2: Place Audit

A Public Life Place Audit of five typical Canberra urban spaces (selected by the ACT Government) including City Walk, Dickson Library, Belconnen Skatepark, Gungahlin Bus Interchange and Anketell Street, Tuggeranong provided an understanding of the public life of and how women and other vulnerable people use public spaces. Intercept interviews during the place audits provided deeper insights into each of the audit site.

DELIVERABLE 3: Stakeholder Consultation

Listening to and working with women, girls and gender diverse people is critical in achieving better design outcomes. In order to design spaces that are safe for the whole community, women's and gender diverse people's voices must be front and centre. The consultation was undertaken in two phases:

Phase 1: Listen to Women's Voices including stakeholder interviews, workshops, YourSay data via a crowd-sourced map, and workshops that were held across five locations.

Phase 2: Co-design - Empathy Building to Understand, Challenge and Test.

Two stakeholder and industry workshop were held to gather further insights and validate the findings from YourSay, the Walkshops, and stakeholder interviews, with the aim of developing solutions for the GSUD Guidelines.

DELIVERABLE 4: Gender Sensitive Urban Design Framework and Implementation Toolkit

The Gender Sensitive Urban Design Framework and Implementation Toolkit was prepared incrementally and in parallel with stakeholder consultation. This allowed stakeholders to have a direct involvement in how the guidelines would work and be embedded in each stakeholder organisation.

DELIVERABLE 1

1 DESKTOP REVIEW
Literature Review
Policy Audit

DELIVERABLE 2

2 PLACE AUDITS
Detailed audits of five locations

DELIVERABLE 3



DELIVERABLE 4



Figure 2. Project Delivery Approach

Walkshops were held in the five urban design spaces. The walkshop at Belconnen skate park specifically targeted girls and young women to understand their experiences of public space.

Photo credit: Communication Link



Applying the Gender Lens to Canberra

The daughter of Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies recalls a time when the simple act of pushing a pram around Canberra's streets was nearly impossible - and her mother, Dame Pattie Menzies, took the problem right to the top. "My mother and I would take the baby for a walk, and every night Dad would come back from Parliament House, and my mother would say, 'Bob, really, these footpaths are a disgrace'," she said.¹¹

Is Canberra an Equitable City?

Canberra's modernist Y-Plan, layered over the Griffin Plan, presents significant urban design challenges for women and other vulnerable individuals.

The Y-Plan's emphasis on separated land uses and heavy dependence on cars as the primary mode of transport¹² exacerbates these challenges. The segregation of housing, work, shopping, and entertainment creates obstacles for women and other vulnerable groups when navigating the city, especially considering their often greater responsibility for domestic and childcare duties. Imagine an average day, where one drives from home to childcare, then proceeds to work and household shopping, only to repeat the journey in reverse. Even with ample financial means and reliable personal transportation, this routine proves difficult. Now, consider the added difficulties faced by those relying on public transport, walking, or cycling. It is crucial to recognise how some planning decisions, which enforce the segregation of our urban existence, have far-reaching consequences for all people, particularly those who play a pivotal role in nurturing family well-being and social cohesion within our communities.¹³

Nonetheless, **Canberra Vital Signs 2021**¹⁴ positively identified that most ACT residents have a strong sense of belonging, and feel Canberra is a welcoming city, are confident that human rights are protected and feel they can trust most people.

While 87% of adults find their local area a safe place to live, there are 16% that feel that it is unsafe to walk outside in their local area at night and another 6% who feel it is unsafe to walk outside in their local area during the day.¹⁵

¹¹ Page 113, The way forward: inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority / Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, Commonwealth of Australia 2008

¹² Page 113, The way forward: inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority / Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, Commonwealth of Australia 2008.

¹³ [Sexism and the city: how urban planning has failed women](#), *The Conversation*, 18 April 2018, Dorina Pojani, Dorthoy Wardale, Kerry Brown.

¹⁴ Page 12, Canberra Vital Signs 2021, taking the pulse of our community, hands Across Canberra, The Snow Foundation.

¹⁵ Page 13, Canberra Vital Signs 2021, taking the pulse of our community, hands Across Canberra, The Snow Foundation.

This figure correlates with the **2019 ACT General Health Survey**¹⁶, which found that most people (69.9%) felt very safe/safe walking in their local area alone after dark. However, when examining the disaggregated data, issues around gender inequality becomes evident. Males were significantly more likely to report feeling very safe/safe than females (86.8% vs 52.4%) and females were significantly more likely to report feeling unsafe/very unsafe than males (21.0% vs 4.6%). It is not uncommon to see statistical aggregation hiding gender biases across many community surveys.

Canberra Vital Signs 2021¹⁷ also found that gender diverse people, people that lived in Canberra for less than three years, and older people had low levels of social connection. It also reported levels of verbal, sexual and physical harassment, especially for youth and LGBTQA+ people that were equal or higher than the Australian average.

The statistics show that at face value, Canberra is a safe and welcoming city, however the disaggregated data highlight that significant gender inequalities in Canberra's public spaces still exist.

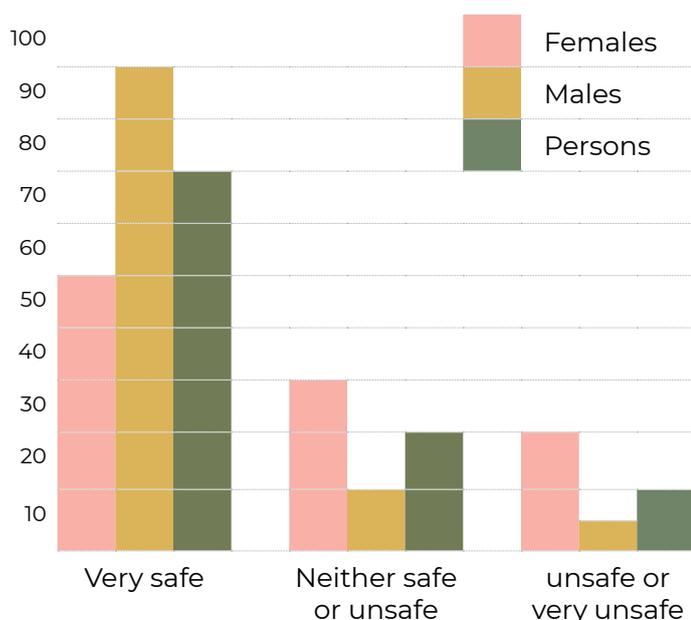


Figure 3. Feels safe walking alone after dark, 18 years and over, 2019 ACT General Health Survey

Policy Context

¹⁶ ACT Government Statistics and Indicators: Perceptions of Safety

¹⁷ Page 13, Canberra Vital Signs 2021, taking the pulse of our community, hands Across Canberra, The snow foundation.

Whilst the development of the GSUD Framework and Toolkit was identified as an action in the ACT Women's Plan 2016-26, it sits within a broader policy context.

The GSUD Framework has been informed by a number of policies and Acts. Most importantly it reflects the Human Rights Act 2004, the ACT Discrimination Act 1991, and the ACT Wellbeing Framework 2020. Additionally, it aims to inform and guide planning and urban design decisions across the ACT, particularly for practitioners and those working in the design of our cities and public spaces.

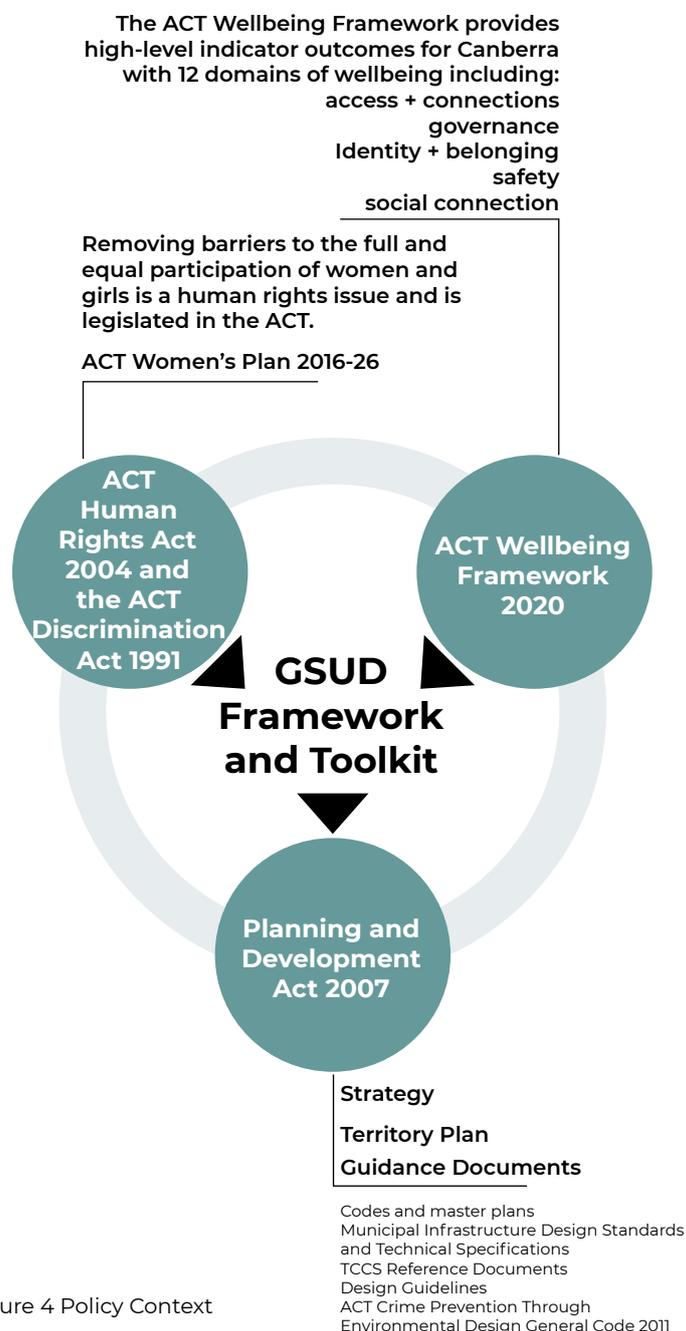


Figure 4 Policy Context

What we heard about Canberra's urban spaces

The thoughts and experiences from over 500 local women, girls, and gender diverse people were collected from a range of community engagement activities. People had multiple opportunities to contribute including place audits, walk-shops, intercept interviews and a survey on the YourSay website. Face to face consultation was held across five typical Canberra urban spaces, including City Walk, Dickson Library, Belconnen Skatepark, Gungahlin Bus Interchange and Anketell Street, Tuggeranong. From the data and insights several key themes emerged:

Safety was ranked the highest issue by all participants.

Both perceived safety and statistical safety play a decisive role in whether people choose to use a public space, or to what extent they engage in defensive behaviour when in the space.

Issues relating to safety ranged from fear of crime (i.e. this space is too dark at night and I'm afraid I will be attacked), fear of injury leading to reduced levels of participation (i.e. "I don't feel confident to ride my bike on this cycle path") to feeling illegitimate in spending time in a public space (i.e. "I pretend to be busy to avoid harassment", or in the instance of teenage girls, "I feel too self-conscious to use this park and I'm afraid I might get teased").

Better **lighting** of public spaces and pathways ranked the highest as a way of improving the safety of urban spaces.

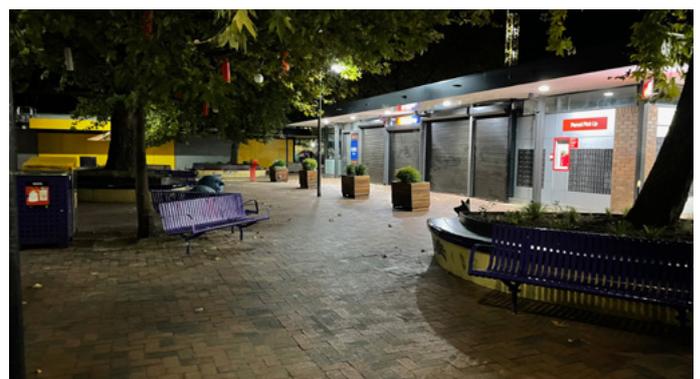
Gungahlin (top photo) rated highly as a safe place at night due to attractive and safe feeling lighting of the light rail stop and shop fronts along Hibberson Street. In contrast Dickson town square (bottom photo) ranked poorly. The poor ranking of Dickson is exacerbated by the high level of homeless people that sit level outside the shops.

Photo credit: PLACE Laboratory

The urban design qualities of **visibility, cleanliness, access, and sociability** ranked highly as critical attributes for making a space feel welcoming and inclusive. Participants recognised that making places welcoming for a broader range of people made the space feel busier, safer, and fostered a sense of community. Better pedestrian access including level surfaces and room for prams, bikes and wheelchair access between highly trafficked areas such as car parks and shops were also highlighted.

A placemaking approach including short term activations, regular events and activities was identified as a way of improving the perception of public space, making them safer, being more inclusive and fostering a sense of community. Suggestions included more activities for children and events that are free.

Some key issues that made spaces feel unsafe such as too much traffic and associated high speeds, inconsiderate driver behaviour, public spaces with no people, poor building interfaces, homelessness, and poor maintenance cannot be resolved by urban design alone and require broader government agency intervention and co-operation.



Case Study: The Haig Park Experiments

During the GSUD engagement process, Haig Park emerged as a notable example of a public space that successfully transformed from being perceived as “useless and dangerous”¹⁸ to becoming a safe and community-focused city park. The Haig Park Experiments initiative exemplifies how a combination of placemaking approaches and physical improvements can bring about a positive shift in the perception, safety, and inclusiveness of a place.

Haig Park, recognised as a listed Heritage Park, was initially plagued by inadequate bathroom facilities, limited access to drinking water, no electricity, and received feedback from the community describing it as ‘unsafe,’ ‘boring,’ ‘dark,’ and ‘underutilised.’ In response, the ACT Government initiated an extensive community engagement process from 2017 to 2018 to gather current experiences of Haig Park and solicit input for future improvements. In 2019, the City Renewal Authority took the first step in revitalising Haig Park by conducting the Haig Park Experiments¹⁹. These experiments involved the implementation of 26 temporary activations, events, and installations, testing the potential for placemaking in the park. The project aimed to

achieve several objectives, including exploring ways to respect the heritage, cultural, and environmental values of Haig Park, improving community stewardship, enhancing the park’s perception, increasing diversity and dwell time of park users, and promoting health and well-being outcomes for the community.

As a result of the Haig Park experiments, there was a notable increase in park visits by 47%. Over the past two years, recommendations for ongoing improvements have been implemented, such as the establishment of a regular Sunday market for continued activation, improved maintenance, footpath and lighting upgrades (already completed), the introduction of a new nature play playground, and the construction of a new community center comprising a pavilion, new toilets, and associated landscaping. These efforts have contributed to the positive transformation and continued revitalisation of Haig Park.

¹⁸ Renewing Haig Park Experiments Summary, Hope, C, Holland, K and Rief, A. (2019). Haig Park Experiments Evaluation Report. City Renewal Authority and University of Canberra, Canberra

¹⁹ Renewing Haig Park Experiments Summary, Hope, C, Holland, K and Rief, A. (2019). Haig Park Experiments Evaluation Report. City Renewal Authority and University of Canberra, Canberra

Photo credit: City Renewal Authority



Since the Haig Park Experiments, a regular Haig Park Village Market has become established.

GSUD Principles

The GSUD Framework is underpinned by a well-defined set of design principles. These principles have been formulated based on a thorough literature review and extensive consultation processes. They serve as the fundamental building blocks and justification for the GSUD Toolkit, offering guidance on how the ACT Government should approach Gender Sensitive Urban Design and drive transformative change across various agencies and portfolios.

The establishment of these principles has involved a comprehensive examination of existing research and a collaborative engagement with stakeholders and experts in the field. This inclusive approach ensures that the principles are informed by a wide range of perspectives and reflect the diverse needs and experiences of the community.

By providing a clear and coherent framework, these principles empower the ACT Government to address Gender Sensitive Urban Design in a systematic and effective manner. They serve as a roadmap for promoting gender equality, inclusivity, and social equity within urban environments. Moreover, the principles offer a guide for driving meaningful change and inspiring action across different government agencies and portfolios, fostering a coordinated approach to urban design that prioritises the needs and aspirations of all community members.

FEELING Safe & BEING Safe

Feeling safe and being safe recognises that perceived risk is just as important as statistical safety (the data of reported crimes).

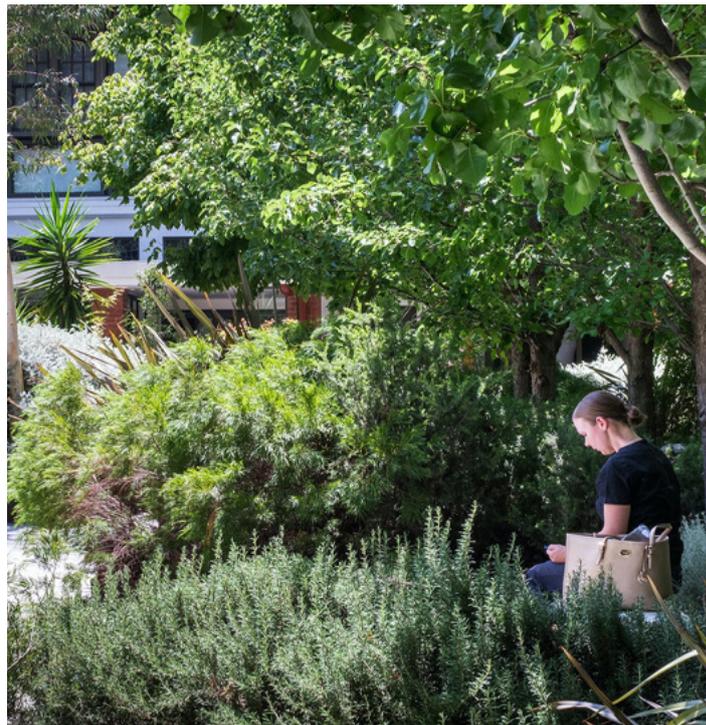


Photo credit: Oculus

Why is this important?

Feeling safe is as vital as being safe, as it directly impacts people's choices and behaviours, potentially limiting their use of public spaces and participation in outdoor activities if they perceive a lack of safety.

To address this, it is important to identify opportunities that enhance the feeling of safety, going beyond fear of crime and considering factors like lighting, visibility, maintenance, social dynamics, inclusivity, and overall comfort. By taking a comprehensive approach to address perceived safety, urban designers and policymakers can create environments that prioritise both actual safety and the sense of security and well-being, encouraging greater utilisation of public spaces and enhancing the overall quality of urban life.

BEYOND Design

Beyond Design is about embedding gender sensitivity as a core value in the ACT Government and incorporating gender equity in the whole of project life cycle – from planning, procurement, design, delivery, ongoing management, and evaluation. This is called gender mainstreaming.



Being HEARD

Being Heard is vital to promoting the representation of women and gender diverse individuals in decision-making processes and ensuring their voices are acknowledged and valued. It entails cultivating empathy towards diverse groups and their unique needs when designing and delivering urban spaces.

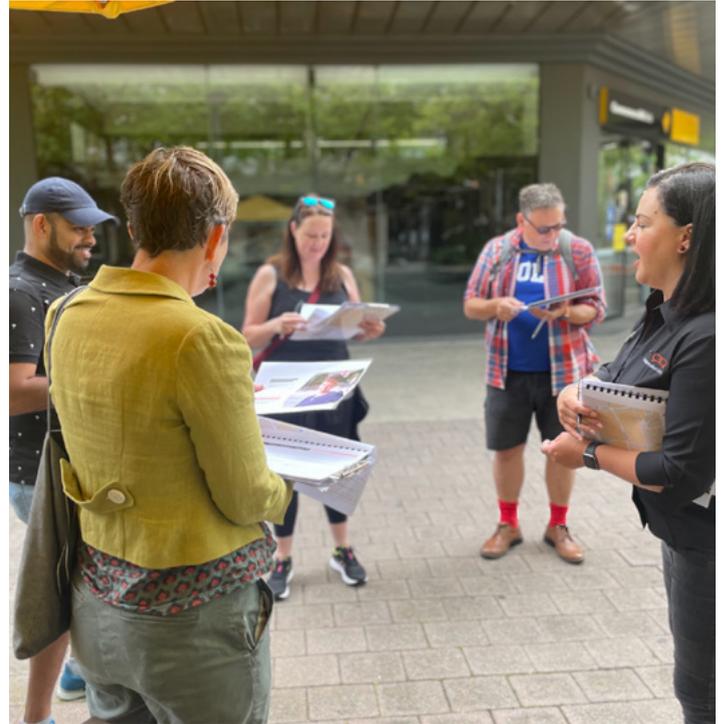


Photo credit: Communication Link

Why is this important?

Ensuring gender sensitivity is integrated throughout every stage of the project life cycle, including policy development, planning, design, ongoing management, place activation, and evaluation, is crucial to creating inclusive spaces for the entire community.

Adopting a whole-of-government approach is essential to foster consistency in implementing gender sensitive design across different directorates and project components. It is important to acknowledge that certain gender-related issues in our cities extend beyond the scope of urban design alone and necessitate collaborative intervention and cooperation among various government agencies. By recognising these complexities and promoting inter-agency collaboration, we can effectively address gender inequalities and create more equitable and inclusive urban environments.

Why is this important?

By actively listening and incorporating diverse perspectives, we can create inclusive environments that prioritise equitable representation and amplify the voices of all community members. This approach forms the foundation of better design thinking, fostering empathy and understanding of the end user.

Hearing different opinions and stories enables designers to empathise with the users of public spaces, breaking the cycle of unconscious gender bias and challenging entrenched thinking. Furthermore, it contributes to increasing the representation of women in design and planning roles, promoting equality in decision-making processes. Additionally, it allows for the ongoing collection of disaggregated data through place audits and surveys, providing valuable insights for informed and inclusive urban design.

PLACE Specific

Place Specific recognises that every place and its community have unique attributes and challenges that need to be responded to.



Photo credit: PLACE Laboratory

Why is this important?

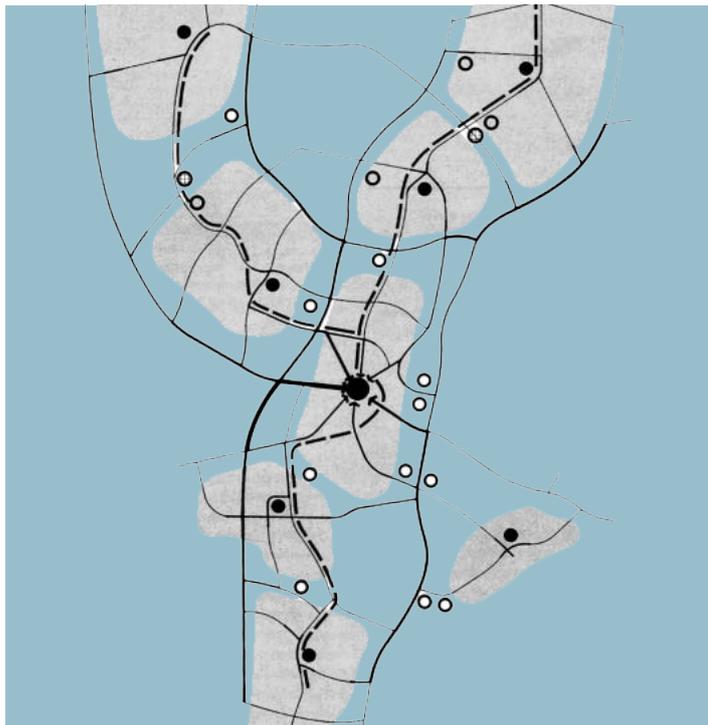
Recognising that one size doesn't fit all is essential in urban design. Each place possesses its own distinct opportunities and challenges that must be considered.

Demonstrating empathy during the design phase allows designers to understand people's experiences within a particular place and the challenges they may encounter.

By incorporating empathy as a fundamental aspect of every project, designers can develop nuanced and context-specific responses that cater to the needs and aspirations of the community. This approach ensures that the design solutions are tailored to the unique characteristics of the place, promoting a more inclusive and meaningful experience for its inhabitants.

Scale Matters

Urban design decisions made at all scales has an impact on gender from the macro-scale right down to the human scale.



RIGHT to the CITY

The Right to the City encompasses the fundamental right to feel a sense of legitimacy in the urban environment, to have the confidence to participate, and to experience a sense of welcome and belonging.



Photo credit: PLACE Laboratory

Why is this important?

Gender sensitivity must be considered at all scales in urban planning and design.

Traditional “gender-neutral” approaches often overlook the differing experiences of women and men in cities. This has particularly harmed certain groups in modernist cities with segregated land use and car-focused mobility.

By embracing gender sensitivity, planners and designers can address these inequalities and create inclusive cities that cater to diverse needs, promoting social equity.

Why is this important?

Promoting spatial equity involves ensuring that public spaces are designed to specifically cater to the needs of women, girls, gender diverse individuals, and other vulnerable groups.

By addressing their concerns regarding safety, sociability, access, and image, we take a crucial step towards legitimising their right to occupy and utilise public spaces. This, in turn, instills confidence in individuals, encouraging their active participation in public life.

By creating inclusive and welcoming environments, we foster a sense of belonging for all, promoting social cohesion and a shared ownership of our public spaces.

Actions

The **GSUD Framework and Toolkit** serve as a comprehensive guide to achieving best-practice urban design outcomes for the public realm, with a specific focus on gender considerations. These resources represent the initial steps towards establishing a new standard for public spaces that are equitable, inclusive, accessible, and safe for all individuals, with particular attention to the needs of women, girls, gender diverse individuals, and other vulnerable groups.

To drive meaningful change, the next crucial phase involves initiating a change process within the ACT Government. This entails embedding a firm commitment to implementing the **GSUD Framework and Toolkit** as a fundamental aspect of the government's role as the owner of projects and policy.

To integrate gender sensitive urban design more extensively, the following actions are part of a strategic approach:

- incorporating the principles of GSUD into a wider range of ACT Government policies and programs
- ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into the decision-making process of urban design projects
- establishing clear responsibilities and accountabilities within the government to drive the implementation of GSUD principles
- providing ongoing training and capacity building to government staff to enhance their understanding of gender sensitive design approaches
- facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing across different government agencies to foster a coordinated and consistent approach to GSUD implementation.

By undertaking these actions, the ACT Government can advance the integration of gender sensitive urban design across various policy domains, promoting more inclusive and equitable outcomes for the community.

Start with a pilot – scale up to policy change

Pilot projects serve as crucial testing grounds for implementing the GSUD Toolkit, shedding light on overlooked issues and demonstrating potential solutions.

They offer tangible examples that policymakers and leaders can endorse, raising the importance of gender sensitivity within government and the wider community.

These projects provide a starting point for mainstreaming gender sensitive urban design into policy, offering valuable lessons and insights for future initiatives.

By showcasing the benefits and successes of pilot projects, awareness and momentum are generated, paving the way for broader implementation and the establishment of a more inclusive and equitable urban environment.

Fix the data gap

To address the data gap, it is essential to initiate data collection on gender sensitivity issues, thereby gaining a comprehensive understanding of the situation in Canberra, monitoring trends, and making informed decisions on how to address them effectively.

It is crucial to carefully consider the type of data being collected, specifically gender disaggregated data, as it enables us to comprehend the diverse experiences of different genders.

Furthermore, fixing the data gap involves establishing an open-source data lake that serves as a repository for storing data and sharing research, insights, trends, and valuable lessons with interested parties, contributing to the social good and fostering collaboration in tackling gender sensitive urban design challenges.

Understand more typologies

To deepen our understanding, it is crucial to assess and audit a wider range of urban design typologies, expanding beyond individual projects. This includes examining macro-scale typologies such as entire suburbs or transportation networks like the light rail system.

By conducting comprehensive assessments and audits, we can gain insights into how these larger-scale typologies impact gender sensitivity and inclusivity in urban environments. This broader analysis will help identify areas for improvement and inform future design interventions that prioritise equitable and inclusive outcomes across different urban contexts.

Embed the core values

To embed gender sensitive urban design as a core value, it is important to develop a comprehensive communication campaign that raises awareness of gender issues and promotes a collective understanding of their significance.

This campaign should target multiple government agencies and stakeholders.

Starting with internal government training programs, the campaign can educate and sensitise staff members about the importance of gender sensitivity in urban design.

By setting gender sensitivity as a core objective in projects, it ensures that gender equity is integrated into the decision-making process from the outset.

This comprehensive approach will foster a culture of inclusivity and ensure that gender sensitive urban design becomes a fundamental consideration across all government agencies, leading to more equitable and inclusive outcomes for the community.

Undertake GSUD Training

To foster cultural change and promote gender equity in urban design, it is crucial to undertake comprehensive gender sensitive training programs.

These training initiatives should aim to raise awareness of gender inequalities and provide strategies for improving gender equity throughout the design process and in the resulting outcomes.

The training needs to be flexible and adaptable, catering to various roles and levels of staff within agencies such as TCCS (Transport Canberra and City Services), EPSDD (Environment, Planning, and Sustainable Development Directorate), SLA (Suburban Land Agency), and CRA (City Renewal Authority).

It should be designed to be relevant and beneficial for staff at all levels, from CEO and Group Manager positions to on-the-ground personnel. By providing accessible and inclusive training opportunities, we can enhance understanding, encourage meaningful engagement, and drive tangible action towards achieving gender sensitive urban design objectives.

Review Guidance Documents

To prioritise gender sensitive urban design outcomes, it is essential to initiate a comprehensive review of guidance documents, such as the Municipal Infrastructure Standards.

This review process should specifically focus on identifying and integrating principles and guidelines that promote gender sensitivity and inclusivity in urban design practices.

By reassessing and updating these guidance documents, we can ensure that they reflect the latest understanding and best practices in gender sensitive urban design. This review will serve as a vital step in aligning policies and standards with the goal of creating equitable and inclusive public spaces that cater to the diverse needs of all community members.

