

**Community  
consultation in the  
development of the  
ACT Women's Plan  
2010-15**

Report on the findings from the online survey

November 2009



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# 1 Introduction

The ACT Office for Women commissioned Urbis to design, run and report on an online survey.

The purpose of the online survey was to collect information from women and girls living in the ACT as part of the community consultation in the development of the *ACT Women's Plan 2010-15*.

## 1.1 Methodology

### 1.1.1 Framing of the online survey - increasing public value

The survey was developed within a 'public values' paradigm. Public value can be described as improving the quality and responsiveness of government and the public service, through interaction with its users, to become 'deliverers' of social value (Moore 1995).<sup>1</sup>

To increase public value Moore (1995) suggests using a 'strategic triangle'. This is a framework that simultaneously requires government to:

- create clear and socially valuable strategic visions and goals
- attract the necessary political, financial, social and legal support, and legitimacy from the political authorising environment needed to attain organisational (government) goals
- develop an operational capacity that enables the organisation to produce the expected outputs and outcomes.

If any one of these conditions is missing, the organisation is not likely to deliver public value. For example, an organisation cannot have a valuable strategic vision without an established operational capacity to achieve it. Without the operational capacity to deliver on the vision, the vision itself will be perceived as unfeasible or other entities will be assigned to accomplish it (Moore 1995).

### 1.1.2 Contribution of the online survey to public value

The online survey formed part of the consultation strategy for the Office for Women, and was a mechanism to draw on intelligence, experience and expertise from women and girls in the ACT.

The findings of the online survey contribute to creating clear and socially valuable strategic visions and goals by seeking the feedback from women and girls about the following:

- perceptions, knowledge and levels of engagement with the six objectives described in the ACT Women's Plan 2004-2009
- perceptions about levels of agency and influence in regard to the six objectives described in the ACT Women's Plan 2004-2009
- perceptions and opinion about the future actions and priorities for ACT women and girls over the next five years
- perceptions of women and girls about their abilities to play an empowering role in a more participatory, resilient, equitable and engaged society.

Feedback has been collected from women in the ACT for the next plan in a variety of forms. Using quantitative data from an online survey will assist in triangulation of the feedback findings. This level of

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<sup>1</sup> Moore, MH, 1995. *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

analysis by the Office for Women could contribute to refining and clarifying the vision and goals of the ACT Women's Plan 2010-2015.

The survey was constructed and hosted on a secure server by a specialist online survey research company (Survey Gizmo). The online survey was piloted to test for any technical problems or issues of terminology with a selection of workers within the Office for Women. The survey was then finalised and approved by the Office for Women.

The survey was administered via direct email containing a uniform resource locator (url) to the secure server and survey. The email containing the url for the survey was promoted through the Office of Women's email networks. 'Snow ball' sampling technique, which is a purposive sampling method often used in social science research, was also used in promoting the survey. The online survey was 'live' for a period of about 4 weeks. The survey was completed by 364 respondents and contained over 1500 free text responses.

To further promote completion of the survey, participants were invited to go into a prize draw for a \$250.00 Coles/Myer voucher. The prize was randomly drawn after the survey closed.

The survey can be found in Appendix A.

### 1.1.3 Analysis

The survey results were imported into Microsoft Excel for uni-variant and multi-variant analysis. The data was 'cleaned' and free text responses were coded into key themes and categories using open coding. Quotes from survey respondents were used to illustrate some findings.

### 1.1.4 Limitations

There are some limitations to this research that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results:

- This research had a focussed approach to fit within the timeframe and budget and this impacted upon the content, length and type of survey questions.
- The sample used in the survey was not randomly selected, therefore the transferability of these findings is very limited.
- While the findings of the research are interesting and allow some key initial inferences to be drawn, these are preliminary research findings only. The conclusions derived from the research provide a basis for further considerations in the development of the next ACT Women's Plan.

### 1.1.5 This report

Following an introduction and executive summary, this report provides the details of the findings from the online survey for each of the survey questions.

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## Executive Summary

### What is this about?

This research was commissioned by the ACT Office for Women. The report provides the findings from a research study conducted via an online survey of women and girls in the ACT.

The aim of the research was to collect information from women and girls in the ACT about their views, perceptions and opinions in respect to representation and recognition, health and wellbeing, communities, financial security and opportunities, as well as education and training.

### Why is it important?

The ACT Office for Women is currently conducting consultations regarding the development of the *ACT Women's Plan 2010-15*. The Office for Women wants to enhance input from women and girls in the ACT into the Plan.

The previous ACT Women's Plan 2004–09 covered the following key themes:

1. representation and recognition
2. good health and wellbeing
3. responsive housing
4. safe inclusive communities
5. economic security and opportunities
6. flexible education and training.

The survey was constructed in consideration of these themes. The findings of the online survey contribute to the consultation strategy and provide quantitative data that can be triangulated with feedback from other consultations like the Women's Summit.

### What is in the report?

The report contains an introduction which outlines the approach taken to the research and the methodology. The next section provides the findings from the survey and details the responses to each of the survey questions.

### What are the key findings?

364 women participated in the survey. Most are aged 18-34, are employed, 'partnered' and have completed tertiary education. The majority had lived in the ACT for more than 10 years.

The key findings from the survey include.

- the most frequently accessed services are related to health
- the services that respondents have difficulties accessing are mostly health services
- respondents generally feel they have influence over most areas of their life and report to have been happy over the last six months
- work life balance remains an issue for many women, and this affects their ability to influence some areas of their life as well as their involvement in some groups and activities in the community

- 
- respondents had mixed feelings about whether the future would be better for women and girls in the ACT
  - well over half the respondents indicated that they feel secure regarding their current financial situation
  - most respondents felt safe in their home, but this was not always the case in the community, where there is a perception that anti-social behaviour towards women is tolerated
  - respondents wanted to see change in the following areas:
    - more flexibility to achieve work-life balance, including more flexible working hours, child-care hours and services being made available after working hours
    - increase the value of women's contribution in the workplace and in the home
    - reduce community tolerance of violence against women.

## 2 Findings from the survey

### 2.1 Who took part in the survey? A profile of the participants

A total of 364 women completed the survey. This section provides information about the respondents. This survey did not use a random sample, however, where possible and appropriate, comparisons have been made against demographic data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

#### 2.1.1 Age of survey participants

Figure 1 gives an overview of the age groups of the survey respondents. 40% of the respondents are aged between 18 and 34, with the highest number of respondents aged 25-34 (30%). 46% are aged between 35 and 54. There were fairly equal numbers of respondents from the 18-24 (10%) and 55-64 aged groups (11%). There was only one respondent from the age groups 14-17 and over 75.

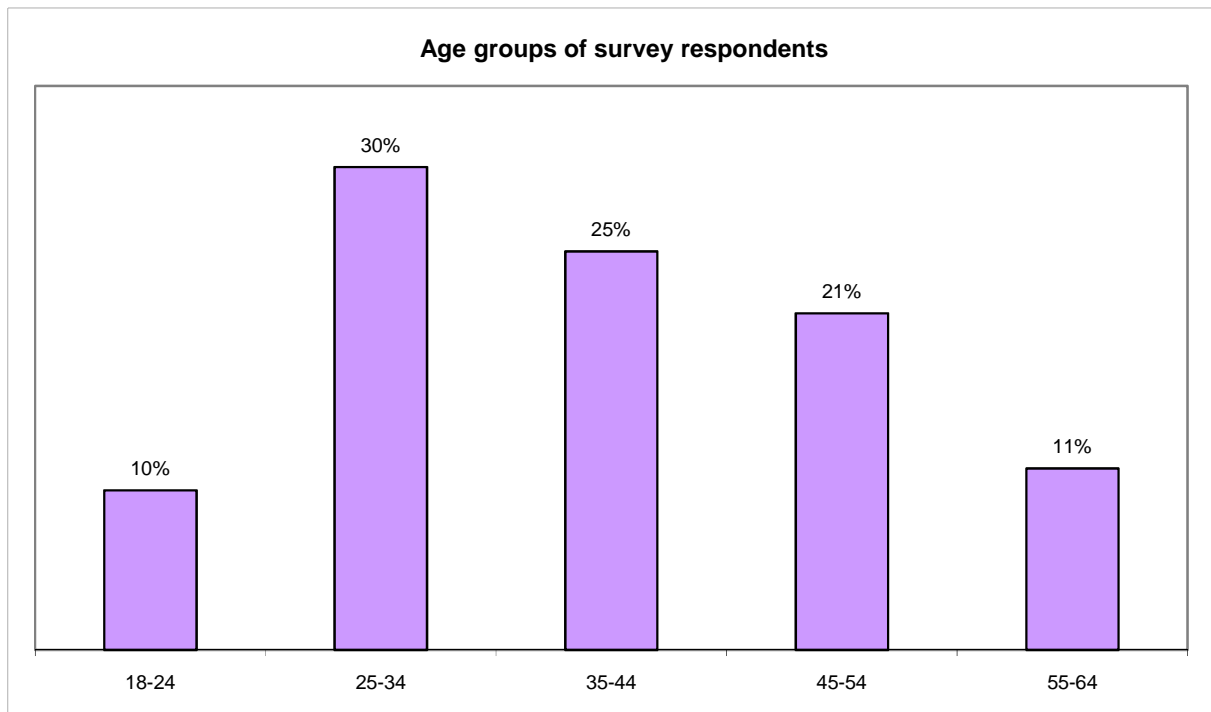


Figure 1

Data from the ABS (2006) indicates that the sample in the survey is slightly different from the age profile of the ACT. The ABS data (2006) states the percentage of women in each age group made up the following percentages 15-24 (15%), 24-34 (16%), 35-44 (23%), 45-54 (15%), 55-64 (10%), 65-79 (4%).<sup>2</sup>

#### 2.1.2 Relationship status

The majority of the women who responded to the survey reported they are 'partnered' (69%) and about one fifth are single (21%). The details are shown in Figure 2 below.

<sup>2</sup> ABS (2006) Basic Community Profile, available at <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au>

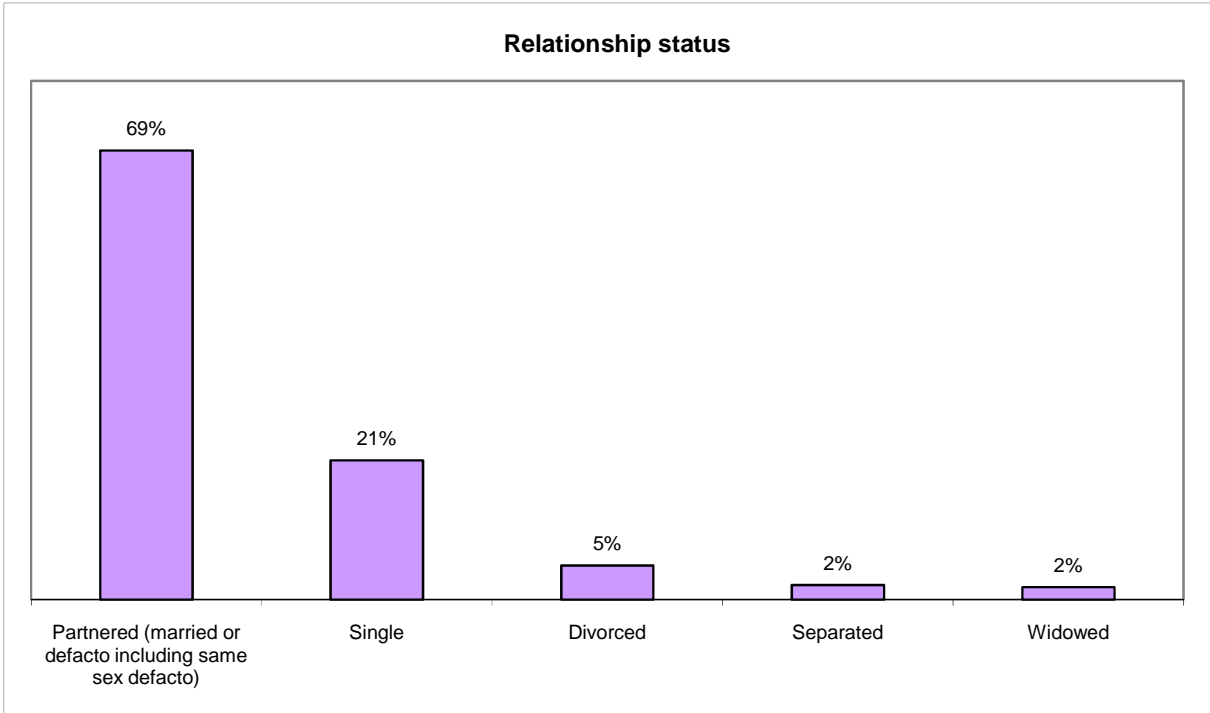


Figure 2

2.1.3 Location and length of time living in the ACT

The following table (Table 1) shows details of the respondents post codes.

Post codes	Percent
2602	16%
2615	10%
2611	8%
2905	8%
2614	7%
2617	5%
2913	5%
2612	5%
2605	4%
2902	4%
2607	4%
2606	3%
2906	3%
2604	2%

2620	2%
2904	2%
2903	2%
2914	1%
2600	1%
2603	1%
2601	1%
2912	1%
2609	1%
2619	1%

Table 1

Most of the respondents have lived in the ACT more than 10 years (69%), with nearly half reporting they have lived there for more than 20 years (46%). About one quarter have lived in the ACT between 1 and 9 years (26%). This is described in Figure 3 below.

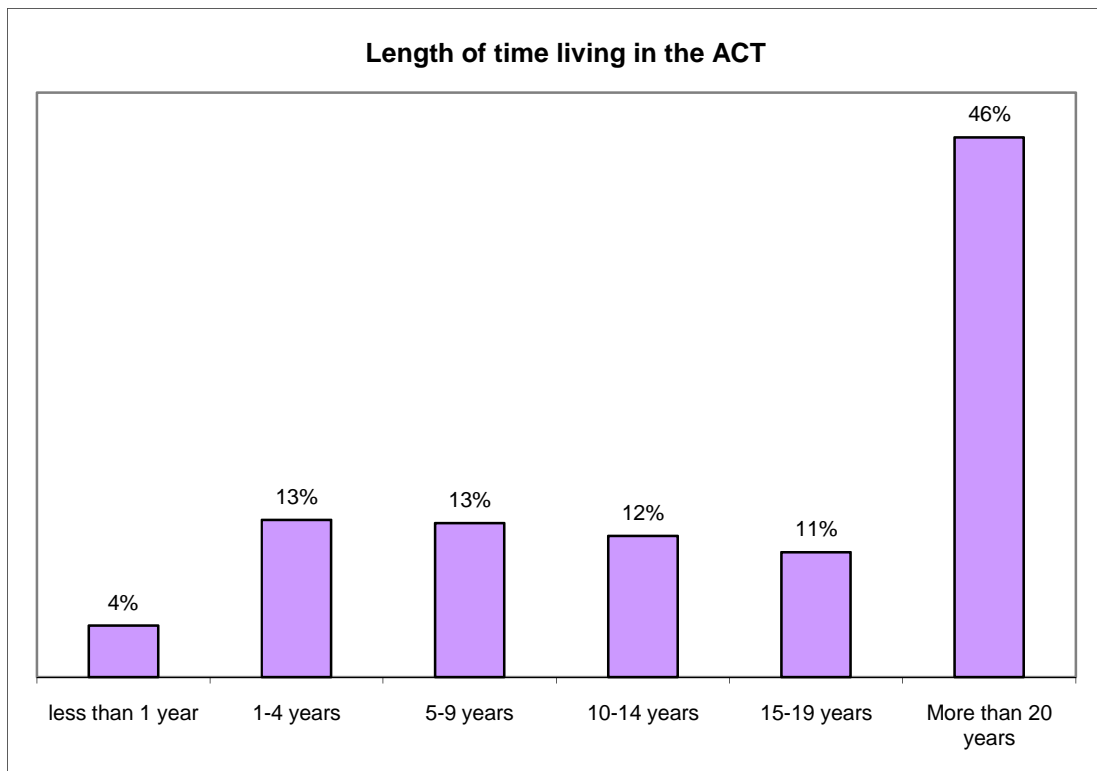


Figure 3

### 2.1.4 Caring roles and education

36% of the women reported they are caring for dependent children and 9% are caring for dependant adults.

Most women have some form of tertiary education, with 41% reporting that they have post-graduate education and 35% reporting they have under-graduate education. This is detailed in Figure 4 below.

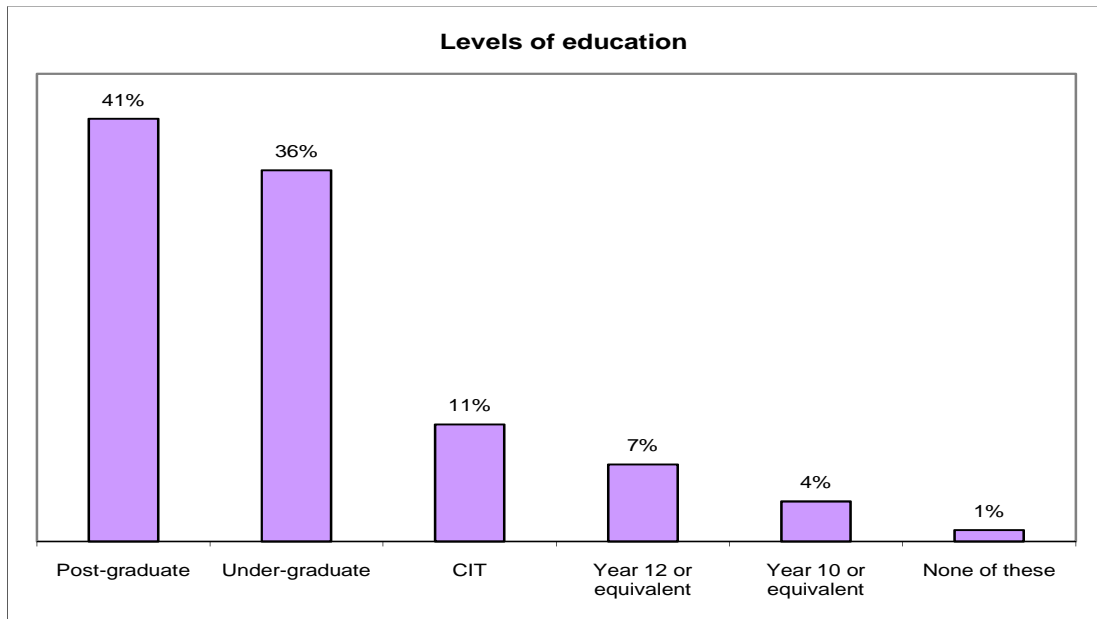


Figure 4

### 2.1.5 Employment status

The vast majority of the respondents indicated that they are employed (90%) and over two thirds are in full time employment (66%). This is shown in Figure 5.

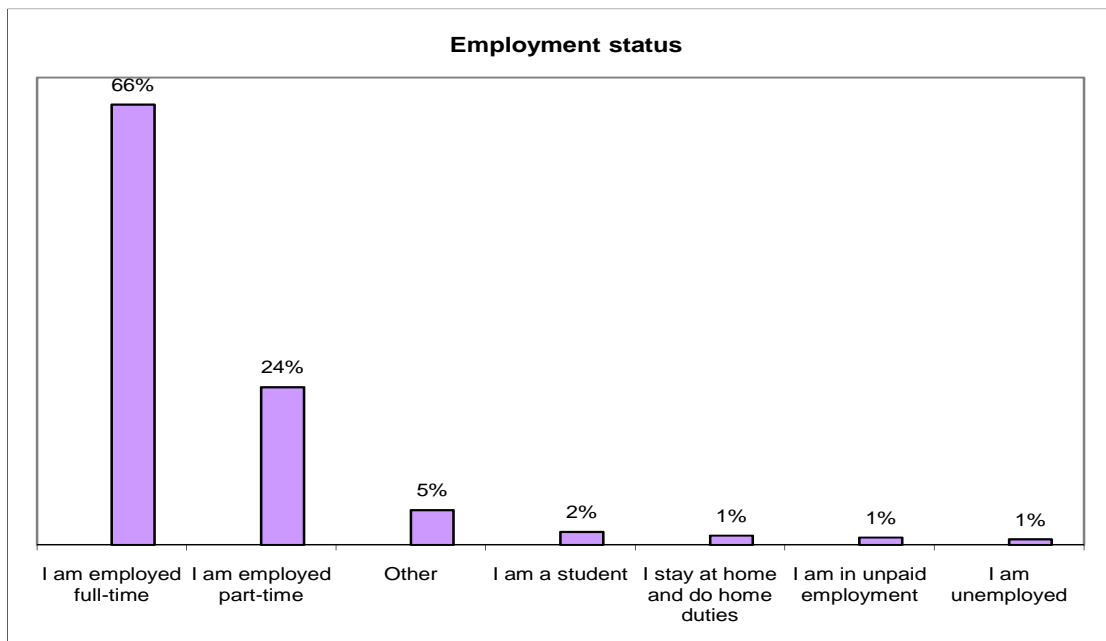


Figure 5

ABS data (2006) indicates that in the 2006-07 period, 65% of women worked full-time.

## 2.1.6 Income

Just over one third of the respondents indicated that their income is between \$50,000-\$75,000 per year (35%). About one third indicated that they earn less than \$50,000 per year (28%). 32% of the respondents indicated they earn more than \$75,000 per year. This is detailed in Figure 6 below.

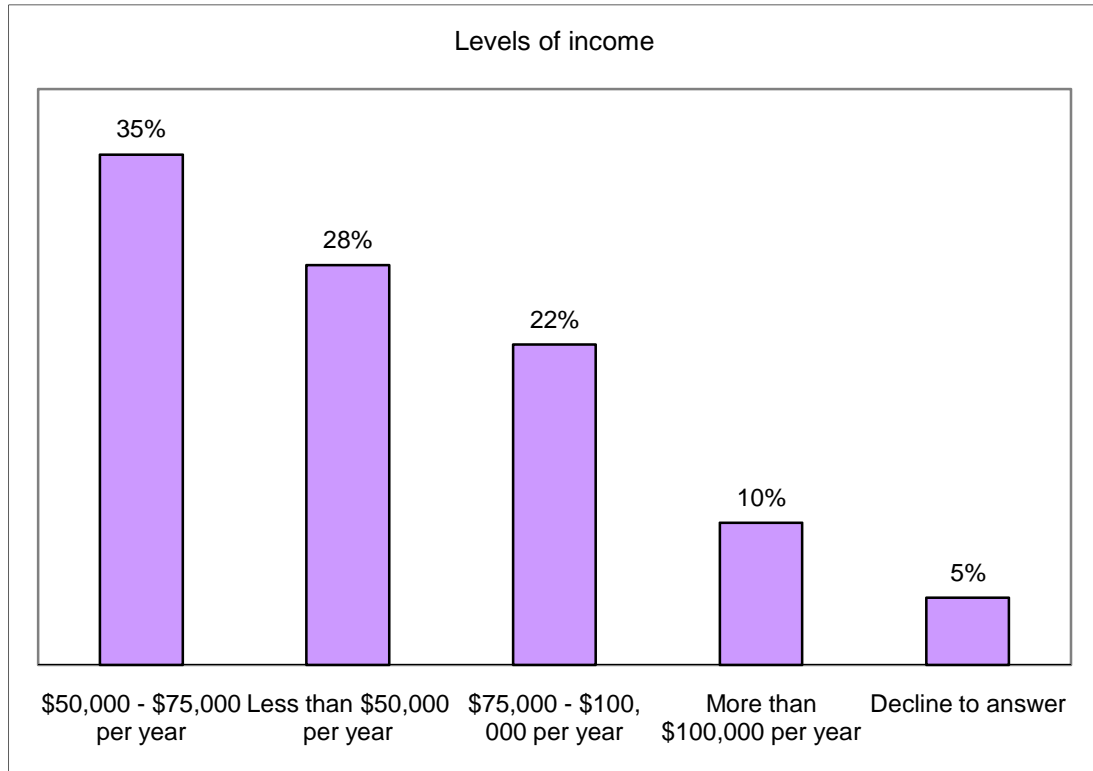


Figure 6

The income of the sample reflected the average income for the ACT to a degree. According to the ABS (2005), the average income for the ACT is \$72,800. The average income for women in the ACT is approximately \$62,600.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.1.7 Ethnic and cultural background

97% of the survey respondents indicated that they are neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 2% indicated they are Aboriginal (7 people) and 1% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Other results showed that:

- 83% speak English in the home
- 10% identified as having a disability or special needs
- 85% born in Australia (see Appendix B for further detail).

ABS data (2006) indicates that: people who identify as Indigenous constitute a small 1.2 % of the ACT population; The culturally and linguistically diverse community make up about 15 % of ACT population (ABS 2006); 74% were born in Australia; and 81% speak English in the home.

<sup>3</sup> ABS (2005) Gross Household Income by State and Territory, 1344.8.55.001 - ACT Stats, 2005, available from <http://www.abs.gov.au>

## 2.2 Service access

Women were asked what type of services they had used in the last 12 months. Multiple responses were allowed. The majority of respondents had accessed health services, which included a doctor, dietician, physiotherapist and so on (95%).

Just under half had accessed sport and recreation facilities (44%). The third most frequently reported service used by women was educational services for example CAE, CIT and university courses (35%). Interestingly, services like child care and maternal child health services were accessed less frequently.

Child-care services or after-school care had been accessed by approximately 14% of the respondents. Maternal child health services were accessed by approximately 7% of the respondents. This is detailed in Figure 7 below.

'Other' services included: vets, women's health services and dental services.

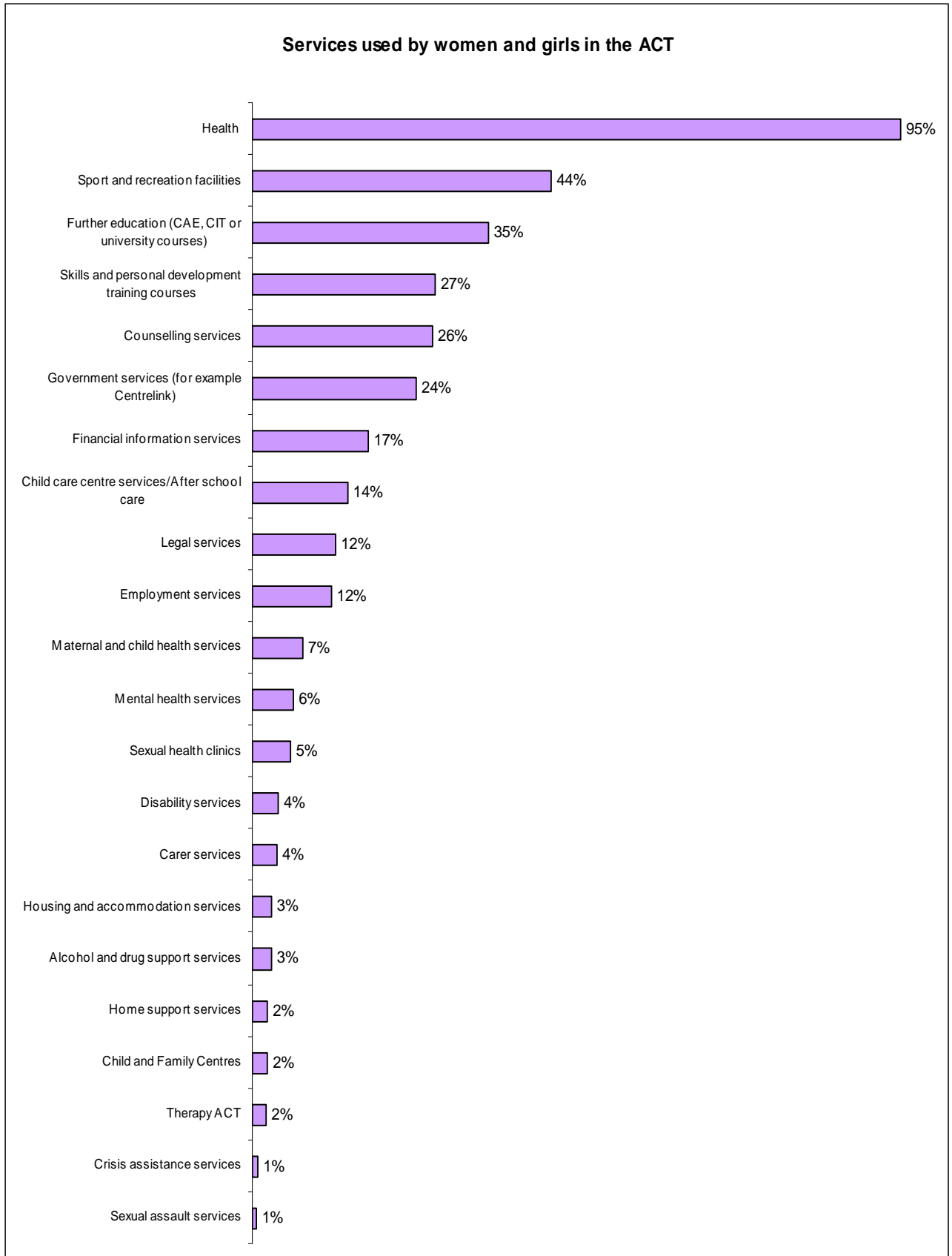


Figure 7

## 2.3 Problems with access to services

Women were also asked about any difficulties they had had accessing services in the last 12 months. Multiple responses were allowed. 57% (206) of the respondents indicated that they had not had any difficulty accessing services in the past 12 months.

Table 2 below, provides details of the services that women had difficulty accessing. It is interesting to note that while health services were the most frequently accessed service, they were also reportedly the service that people had most difficulty accessing (35%).

For the other services that were listed, the survey results indicated that far fewer women had had difficulty accessing those services.

Services women had difficulty accessing	Percent age
Health	35%
Counselling services	5%
Government services (for example Centrelink)	4%
Child care centre services/After school care	3%
Mental health services	3%
Legal services	2%
Other	2%
Further education (CAE, CIT or university courses)	2%
Maternal and child health services	2%
Financial information services	2%
Housing and accommodation services	2%
Sport and recreation facilities	1%
Employment services, and	1%
Skills and personal development training courses	1%
Carer services	1%
Home support services (services that help people live at home, for example, aged care services, meals on wheels, home nursing services)	1%
Therapy ACT	1%
Alcohol and drug support services	<1%
Sexual health clinics	<1%

Table 2

Cross tabulations with post code indicated that the main areas where women have difficulty accessing health services are in the areas of the: Inner North (19%), Belconnen (19%), Tuggeranong (6%) and Gungahlin (4%).

## 2.4 Frequency and impact

Survey respondents were asked to give an approximation of how often they had had difficulty accessing services and what the impact had been.

The vast majority of respondents indicated they had difficulty accessing health services between one and four times in the last 12 months. This appeared to be directly related to access to health services, particularly general practitioners (GPs). There were many reports of difficulty getting appointments and perceptions about the lack of GPs in the ACT.

For example, one woman noted:

*I have had to travel to NSW because I know I have a doctor there and it is just easier to travel there than attempting to locate an available GP in the ACT. I have put off having a skin cancer checks for 6 months because I couldn't find a GP.*

The survey asked what had been the main cause for difficulty accessing the service. The most frequently cited reason for not being able to access health services is not being able to secure an appointment. Respondents indicated that difficulty getting appointments is because of long waiting lists, limited after-hours service (noted by women that were working), not enough GPs in the area, and 'the books were closed'.

The second most frequently reported reason why women had difficulty accessing other services, was that they did not know about the service or were unable to find adequate information about the service. This was followed closely by costs of service being a barrier, especially for health services and specialist medical services and childcare.

Overall, 58% of respondents indicated that accessing services had had a big impact on them, 37% indicated it had had an impact, but not much.

The following are some direct quotes from the survey that illustrate some of the impacts.

*It is difficult to get appointments in the ACT to see doctors and skin specialists - this seems to be due to a shortage of practitioners - it would be great if the ACT could get more practitioners so that there isn't such a long wait for these services*

*I had to take time off work without certificate or forced to go to work ill or child left at home alone as not able to get the appointment when needed – therefore nil certificate.*

*...you almost need to plan to get sick - because when you are sick you can't get an appointment*

*I missed quite a lot of work over childcare problems. This is expensive and very bad for my employment.*

### 2.4.1 Influence

The survey explored various areas that are usually part of a woman's life, for example, health, relationships, housing and work.

Survey respondents were asked to give an indication of how much influence they thought they have over these areas.

The table below (Table 3) provides a summary of the survey responses.

It appears that women in the survey felt they have a lot of influence over most domains tested through this survey. The areas that scored the highest are around women's perceptions of influence in their personal life, health and relationships. 90% of women reported they feel a lot of influence over their personal life. 81% reported that they have a lot of influence over their health. 83% reported they feel they have a lot of influence over their family and relationships.

The areas of work, finances, education and personal safety, received high scores. Three quarters of respondents indicated that they have influence in these areas (73%, 73%, 69%, and 68% respectively).

The area where women feel they have comparatively less influence concerned housing and the community. 65% of women indicated they feel they have a lot of influence in regard to housing. Less than half of women think that they had some influence, but not much, in the community (40%).

Cross tabulations did not reveal any particular patterns with regard to age, ethnic or cultural background. Although it was noted several times that women living with a disability or from a non-English-speaking background may have less influence in some areas of their life, particularly work and relationships.

Domain	No influence	Some influence but not much	Undecided	A lot of influence	Don't know
Personal life	0%	5%	4%	90%	0%
Family/relationships	1%	10%	5%	83%	1%
Health	3%	13%	3%	81%	0%
Finances	1%	15%	9%	73%	1%
Education	3%	12%	10%	73%	2%
Work (paid or unpaid)	5%	17%	8%	69%	1%
Personal safety	2%	18%	11%	68%	1%
Housing	8%	18%	8%	65%	1%
Community	11%	40%	17%	29%	3%

Table 3

Respondents were also asked what they think influences their feelings of control in these areas. The free text responses were coded into key themes.

The majority of responses indicated that women felt their personal attitude is most influential to their feelings of control. This was followed very closely by adequate education and knowledge. Women reported that an understanding of the systems that they live in make them feel more confident and in control. Interestingly, access to sufficient finances was mentioned less frequently. Well over half of respondents indicated that being able to make choices, especially around work and social networks/supports highly influenced feelings of control. 'Life experience' was also mentioned by many older women to influence feelings of control.

## 2.4.2 Community engagement

Community engagement is often measured in the kinds of groups and activities that people become involved in. In the survey women were asked what kinds of groups and activities they participated in. Multiple responses were allowed. Only 22% of women reported that they are not involved in any groups or activities at the moment.

Of the women that indicated they were involved in groups or activities (282), about one third of the women indicated that they are involved in sporting clubs and sporting groups (33%). About one fifth indicated that they are involved in interest groups, are members of committees, or are involved in volunteer groups. The following table provides a break down of the responses (Table 4).

Activities and groups	Percentage
Sporting clubs/groups	33%

Interest groups	22%
Boards/committees	22%
Volunteer groups	20%
Leisure groups	17%
Local community groups (for example play groups)	17%
School related groups	14%
Lobby or advocacy groups	13%
Religious groups	12%
Trade unions	12%
Environmental groups	9%
Choirs	5%
Groups relevant to my cultural and ethnic background	4%
Groups associated with political parties	3%
Professional body	1%

Table 4

Respondents were asked what kinds of things influence their decision to become involved in community groups, activities and organisations (total of respondents 282).

Just over one third of women indicated that family responsibilities appeared to play some role in encouraging women to join groups and organisations (35%), although just under half said it had no effect on their decision (47%).

Most of the respondents stated that caring responsibilities also had no effect on their decision to join a group or organisation (65%). However, about one fifth reported that it had encouraged them (20%).

It was also clear that language skills had no effect on most of the respondents regarding a decision to join a group or organisation (90%). This reflects the profile of the respondents. Of the women that indicated they were from a non-English-speaking background, language skills motivated them to join a group (9%).

Workload appeared to have a fairly significant influence on discouraging women from joining groups or organisations. 58% of women already involved in groups and organisations, indicated that workload had a negative impact on decisions to join groups. About one third stated it had no effect on the decision (33%).

Women's financial situation appeared to have little impact on most women's decision to join a group or organisation, with 70% of women stating this did not affect their decision.

Respondent's skills and qualifications had mixed influences. Just under half of the respondents indicated that their skills and qualifications had encouraged them to join an organisation (43%). Equally, just over half indicated that it had no effect on the decision (51%).

Interest in community activities appeared to influence women to join organisations and groups (68%), although about one third stated this had no effect of the decision (29%).

Most of the respondents stated that age, ethnic or cultural background, recognition of peers had no effect on the decision to join a group or organisation (72%, 91% and 74% respectively).

### 2.4.3 Safety at home and in public spaces

Women were asked to provide an opinion as to how safe they felt at home and in public areas in the ACT. Most indicated that they felt safe at home, although this was not always the case in public spaces.

81% of women agreed with the statement 'I always feel safe in my own home'. 48% indicated that they agreed with this statement and 33% indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement. 11% indicated that they disagreed.

Crossed tabulations indicated that of the respondents who disagreed with the statement 'I always feel safe in my own home':

- 12% are aged between 18-34, and 9% are aged between 35-54
- 5 respondents live in Inner North, 10 live in Woden Valley and rural regions towards the NSW border, and 4 live in Tuggeranong
- 7 respondents are divorced, 19 are partnered and 13 are single.

Views about safety in public areas were much more mixed, with 42% of women indicating that they did not agree with the statement 'I always feel safe in public areas'. 38% of women stated that they did agree with this statement. Almost one fifth were unable to provide an opinion (19%).

Of the respondents who indicated that did not feel safe in public spaces the following table (Table 5) shows a cross tabulation against post code.

Post code of where respondents live who indicated they do not feel safe in public spaces	Total
2600	2
2602	26
2603	2
2604	2
2605	9
2606	6
2607	3
2609	1
2611	15
2612	9
2614	5
2615	22
2617	7
2618	1
2620	5
2621	1
2902	7

2903	4
2904	3
2905	8
2906	6
2912	1
2913	8
2914	2
total	155

Table 5

## 2.5 Perceptions around tolerance of antisocial behaviour

It is interesting to consider women's opinions regarding safety in public places, with the findings from the survey regarding perceptions around tolerance of antisocial behaviour.

In the survey, women were asked to reflect on acceptance of anti-social behaviour. Only 10% of the respondents chose the statement 'the ACT community does not tolerate any antisocial behaviour against women'. Over three quarters of the respondents indicated that they think 'the ACT community tolerates antisocial behaviour against women' (77%). Within this group almost half of the respondents indicated that they think that 'the ACT community tolerates some, but not much, antisocial behaviour against women' (46%). Nearly one quarter of the respondents thought that 'the ACT community tolerates quite a lot of antisocial behaviour against women' (24%), and 7% that community tolerates antisocial behaviour against women. Cross tabulations against age and length of time in the ACT were not revealing. The following table (Table 6) provides a breakdown of the respondents who indicated they feel that the community tolerates anti-social against women and post code.

Post code of where respondents live who indicated they feel that the community tolerates anti-social against women and post code	Total
2064	1
2582	1
2600	2
2601	2
2602	46
2603	4
2604	7
2605	15
2606	8
2607	9
2609	2

2611	24
2612	12
2614	19
2615	24
2617	17
2618	1
2619	1
2620	7
2900	1
2901	1
2902	14
2903	6
2904	6
2905	23
2906	10
2912	3
2913	11
2914	5
Total	282

Table 6

## 2.6 Feelings of agency

Respondents were asked to provide an opinion about feelings of agency regarding their financial situation, satisfaction with life, support networks, work-life balance, leadership skills, and feelings of optimism regarding the future for women and girls in the ACT. The following table provides a summary of the responses (see Table 7).

Well over half the respondents indicated that they feel secure regarding their current financial situation (66%). Just under one quarter indicated that did not feel secure (23%).

Less than half of the respondents were able to agree with the statement that they had the information they needed to make decisions about their financial affairs (44%). About one third of women indicated that they disagreed with the statement, indicating that they did not think they had enough information about their financial affairs (30%).

Feelings of satisfaction about life were also variable. 46% of women indicated they agreed with the statement that they are totally satisfied with life at the moment. 30% disagreed and 23% were unable to agree or disagree.

Generally, most women agreed they had enough support to do the things that were important to them (69%).

Work life balance also seemed to be an issue for many women in the survey. Only 40% agreed with the statement 'my work-life balance allows me to do all the things I want to do'. 45% of women disagreed with the statement, and 13% were unable to provide an opinion.

Respondents were asked to either agree or disagree with the following statement, 'I think that I have been very happy over the last six months'. 37% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 26% disagreed, and 27% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Over half the women agreed that they had leadership skills and opportunities to use them (52%). About one quarter disagreed with the statement (26%), and approximately one fifth of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (21%).

Respondents had mixed feelings about whether the future would be better for women and girls in the ACT. Although nearly half agreed that they feel confident that the future will be better for women and girls (46%), 37% neither agreed or disagreed and 13% disagreed.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I feel secure about my current financial situation	17%	49%	11%	15%	8%	0%
I have all the information I need to make decisions about my financial affairs	13%	41%	14%	25%	5%	1%
I am totally satisfied with life at the moment	9%	37%	23%	23%	7%	0%
I have enough support to do the things that are important to me	17%	52%	13%	13%	4%	1%
My work-life balance allows me to do all the things I want to do	9%	31%	13%	30%	15%	1%
I think that I have been very happy over the last 6 months	12%	35%	27%	17%	9%	0%
I have the leadership skills and opportunities to use them	13%	39%	21%	20%	6%	1%
I feel confident that the future will be better for women and girls in the ACT	9%	37%	37%	10%	3%	4%

Table 7

The survey also asked respondents to reflect on the areas of life where they wanted to see the most change for women and girls in the next five years.

Their responses fell into the following categories, which align with some of the findings from a previous question. Many women indicated that they want to have more flexibility to achieve work-life balance. This included more flexible working hours, child-care hours and services being made available after working hours. More flexible working hours also included greater opportunities to move between

full-time and part-time work as well as increased options for 'working from home' arrangements. This particularly applied to women returning to work following having a baby.

Available, affordable and accessible services like health and child care, also featured as areas where women wanted to see change.

Several respondents also talked about the importance of increasing the value of women's contribution in the workplace, and the term "glass ceiling" was used frequently. Many felt this should be reflected in pay parity and improved career prospects.

Finally, issues of safety and freedom from anti-social behaviour in the community and domestic violence were raised. Respondents expressed concerns about community attitudes to violence against women, and that this needed to change.

### 2.6.1 Women's influence

Survey respondents were also asked how influential they think women are in key areas of community life. These areas included government, business, personal and professional.

Table 8 below provides a breakdown of the responses.

Respondents think women are influential in the following sectors or areas: the community, government, education, health, family, relationships and caring roles. Respondents think women are less influential in the business sector, and areas like the legal profession, trade unions, industrial relations and the workplace.

The two key areas where survey respondents indicated they think women are the most influential are parenthood and caring roles (51% and 63% respectively). The top three areas where women are often influential include: the community, health care, and education (65%, 57% and 54% respectively).

Area	Women are the most influential	Women are often influential	Women are sometimes influential	Women are the least influential
The community	10%	65%	24%	1%
The Government	2%	36%	53%	9%
Education	12%	54%	33%	1%
Health care	9%	57%	31%	2%
The business sector	2%	16%	57%	25%
Health service sector	6%	50%	40%	4%
Amongst other women	29%	52%	18%	1%
Parenthood	51%	43%	6%	0%
Relationships	29%	54%	15%	2%
Caring roles	63%	31%	5%	0%
The law	2%	21%	52%	26%
Trade unions	1%	20%	54%	26%

The work place	2%	36%	49%	13%
Industrial relations	1%	18%	55%	26%

Table 8

Respondents were asked to give reasons why they thought women had influence in some areas and not others. The responses fell into the following three categories: gender imbalance within historically male dominated industries and professions; community attitudes towards women in positions of leadership; and beliefs about traditional gender roles. Many women commented that they feel they live in a system that is not responsive to working parents. These women noted that a decision to have a baby often meant sacrificing career choices, thus influencing their income, work options and ultimately their feelings of agency and control.

The following quotes provide some examples to illustrate these three categories.

*Generally I think women have a fair amount of influence in various aspects of life but I think they have the most amount of influence when it comes to caring for children and parenting responsibilities partly due to social expectations and limited alternatives for others to take on these roles.*

*I can only talk from my experience in the public sector. Women are influential but have to learn a lot to support other women. Women are in influential positions, but not in top positions. Women in senior positions are often very insecure and this is felt on the middle to lower management. Women dominate in the health, family and education areas. Often to the extent that there is discrimination against men. I think the workplace needs a mixture of men and women in teams to work properly. At present in private and government there are many women in senior positions, but the top is lacking in women. It is interesting to see no matter how many women there are in an organisation, the head of the organisation is often male. Hopefully in the years ahead there will be a 50/50 in all areas of work.*

*I think women are constantly undervalued in our families, communities and in public life. I think that if women were better valued, then, for example, levels of violence against women would not be so high. Indeed, life would look different - there would be better representation for women in business and government, child care, community work and health care would be better valued and paid.*

*Women typically have more influence in the 'private' sphere of home and family. In the public sphere, women's influence and achievements are still largely judged by male standards of behaviour. The workplace in particular, remains stuck in an outdated model of people's lives centering around their job. This is not just a problem for women, but affects them more because they 'opt-out' of the system to do other things, and thus don't occupy positions of influence as much.*

*Women are not always represented in a variety of sectors, in particular the business and law sector. There is a large presence of women in health and within the community sector. Does not seem to be many women in positions of power in these sectors and in the public eye, women are always associated with their fertility - they do not seem to be able to succeed on their own merits, they're always mothers and/or wives, instead of being recognised as hard working, intelligent, successful people. This does not happen (or rarely happens) to men!*

*In the ACT there are many women in high ranking jobs in the government, non-government and private sectors, however we still live in a male dominated society in many ways and therefore women's sphere of influence in some areas is still not as great as it could be, but it is changing slowly.*

# Appendix A    Online survey

# Survey of Women and Girls in the ACT

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## Introduction

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This survey has been commissioned by the Office for Women in the ACT. The survey is targeted at all women and girls in the ACT. The information gathered from this survey will help to inform the next ACT Women's Plan.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Questions marked with a red asterisk have to be answered to proceed.

The survey explores different aspects of women's lives. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, we want to know what you think and that is very individual. There are no questions that identify you. The information will not be used for any other purpose except to assist the Office for Women.

If you wish, at the end of the survey, you can go into a draw to win a \$250 Coles/Myer voucher.

If you have any questions regarding this survey please contact Karen Olver, Social Research Consultant, Urbis on 03 8663 4865.

If you would like to find out more information about the development of the next ACT Women's Plan please visit [www.women.act.gov.au](http://www.women.act.gov.au)

## Service access

---

1. Looking at the list of service types below, please indicate which ones you have used in the last 12 months (Select all that apply to you). (Required)

Alcohol and drug support services

Health (doctor, dietician, physiotherapist, chiropractor and so on)

Child care centre services/After school care

Counselling services

Crisis assistance services

Domestic violence services

Sexual assault services

Employment services

Financial information services

Further education (for example CIT or university courses)

Government services (for example Centrelink)

Skills and personal development training courses

English as a second language courses (ESL)

Housing and accommodation services

Legal services

Maternal and child health services

Mental health services

Sexual health clinics

Sport and recreation facilities

Home support services (for example services that help people live at home, for example, aged care services, meals on wheels, home nursing services)

Disability services

Child and Family Centres

Therapy ACT

Carer services

Other (please specify)

## Service access

---

2. Thinking about the services on the list, are there any services that you had difficulty accessing in the past 12 months? (Select all that apply to you). (Required)

I have had no difficulties accessing any services in the past 12 months

Alcohol and drug support services

Health (doctor, dietician, physiotherapist, chiropractor and so on)

Child care centre services/After school care

Counselling services

Crisis assistance services

Domestic violence services

Sexual assault services

Employment services

Financial information services

Further education (for example CIT or university courses)

Government services (for example Centrelink)

Skills and personal development training courses

English as a second language courses (ESL)

Housing and accommodation services

Legal services

Maternal and child health services

Mental health services

Sexual health clinics

Sport and recreation facilities

Home support services (for example services that help people live at home, for example, aged care services, meals on wheels, home nursing services)

Disability services

Child and Family Centres

Therapy ACT

Carer services

Other (please specify)

## Service access

---

3. The following three questions in the survey explore: how often you have had difficulties accessing services, why you had difficulties, and what the impact was on you.

How often in the past 12 months have you had difficulty accessing the services you mentioned? (for example, once a month, two to three times in the past six months, once or twice a year) (Required)

## Service access

---

4. What was the main reason you had difficulty accessing the service? (for example, you could not afford it, you did not feel comfortable using it, you could not get there, you did not know about it etc).

## Service access

---

5. Thinking about the reasons you had difficulty getting the services you needed, what impact did this have on you? (Required)

It had a big impact

It had some impact - but not much

It had no real impact

I don't know

6. Thinking about the impact on you, are there other comments you would like to make?

## Personal influence

---

7. Listed below are some areas that are usually a part of a woman's life. Please give an indication of how much influence you think you have over these things today. (Each area requires a response). (Required)

	No influence	Some influence but not much	Undecided	A lot of influence	Don't know
Health					
Personal safety					
Family/relationships					
Personal life					
Finances					
Housing					
Community					
Work (paid or unpaid)					
Education					

# Control

---

8. What do you think influences your feelings of control over these areas? (Required)

## Community engagement

---

9. Looking at the list below, please indicate what kinds of groups or activities you are involved in (select all that apply to you) (Required)

- I am not involved in any groups
- Local community groups (for example play groups)
- Religious groups
- Groups relevant to my cultural and ethnic background
- Groups associated with political parties
- Lobby or advocacy groups
- Environmental groups
- Boards/committees
- Interest groups
- Sporting clubs/groups
- Trade unions
- School related groups
- Leisure groups
- Volunteer groups
- Choirs
- Another type of group not listed here (please specify)

## Community engagement

---

10. What kinds of things influence your decision to get involved in community groups and organisations? From the list below, please indicate how much each of these things influenced your decision. (Required)

	This encouraged me to join the group/organisation	This had no affect on my decision to join the group/organisation	This discouraged me from joining the group/organisation
Family responsibilities			
Caring responsibilities			
My language skills			
Work load			
My financial situation			
My skills and qualifications			
Interest in community activities			
My age			
My ethnicity or cultural background			
My health			
Recognition from my peers			

## Safety

---

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

“I always feel safe in my own home” (Required)

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

## Safety

---

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

“I always feel safe in public areas” (Required)

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

## Safety

---

13. How tolerant do you think the ACT community is of anti-social behaviour against women?

(Anti-social behaviour is anything that causes or is likely to make a woman feel afraid, unsafe, alarmed or distressed).

Please select which statement you think is correct. (Required)

- The ACT community does not tolerate any anti-social behaviour against women
- The ACT community tolerates some but not much anti-social behaviour against women
- The ACT community tolerates quite a lot of anti-social behaviour against women
- The ACT community tolerates anti-social behaviour against women
- I am not sure

## Skills

---

14. Thinking about your personal situation, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. All the statements require a response.

Please scroll down the page as needed. (Required)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I feel secure about my current financial situation						
I have all the information I need to make decisions about my financial affairs						
I am totally satisfied with life at the moment						
I have enough support to do the things that are important to me						
My work-life balance allows me to do all the things I want to do						
I think that I have been very happy over the last 6 months						
I have the leadership skills and opportunities to use them						
I feel confident that the future will be better for women and girls in the ACT						

## Future

---

15. In the next 5 years, in what areas of life do you most want to see change for women and girls in the ACT? (Required)

## Women's influence

---

16. How influential do you think women are in the following areas in the ACT? (Please rate the extent to which you think women have influence for each area listed below). (Required)

	Women are the most influential	Women are often influential	Women are sometimes influential	Women are the least influential
The community				
The Government				
Education				
Health				
The business sector				
The health sector				
Amongst other women				
Parenthood				
Relationships				
Caring roles				
The law				
Trade unions				
The work place				
Industrial relations				

## Women's influence

---

17. Can you give some reasons why you think this?

## Demographics

---

18. What is your age group? (Required)

14-17

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65 -74

75 and over

19. What is your relationship status? (Required)

Partnered (married or defacto including same sex defacto)

Single

Widowed

Separated

Divorced

## Post code and time living in the ACT

---

20. What is the post code of your primary residence in the ACT? (Required)

21. How long have you been living in the ACT? (Required)

less than 1 year

1-4 years

5-9 years

10-14 years

15-19 years

More than 20 years

## Caring roles

---

22. Do you have dependent children? (Required)

Yes

No

23. Are you caring for dependant adults? (Required)

Yes

No

# Education

---

24. What is your highest level of education? (Required)

Post-graduate

Under-graduate

CIT

Year 12 or equivalent

Year 10 or equivalent

None of these

## Employment and income

---

25. Which of the following best describes your employment situation? (Required)

- I am employed full-time
- I am employed part-time
- I am in unpaid employment
- I am unemployed
- I am a student
- I stay at home and do home duties
- Other

26. What is your average gross income? (Required)

- Less than \$49,999 per year
- \$50,000 - \$74,999 per year
- \$75,000 - \$99, 999 per year
- More than \$100,000 per year
- Decline to answer

## Place of birth and language spoken at home

---

27. In which country were you born? (Required)

Australia

Somewhere else? (please specify)

28. Do you identify as ... (Required)

Aboriginal

Torres Strait Islander

Both

Neither

29. Does anyone in your household speak a language other than English? (Required)

Yes

No

30. Do you identify as having a disability or special needs? (Required)

Yes

No

## Voucher

---

31. If you would like to enter the prize draw for a \$250.00 Coles /Myer Voucher, please provide your name and contact details. The winner will be notified after October 12 2009.

I do not wish to enter for the prize draw

I would like to enter for the prize draw. My name and phone number is....

# Appendix B

# Details

## Country of birth

Value	Count
Australia	308
UK	10
England	12
New Zealand	3
Canada	2
Germany	2
South Africa	2
Sri Lanka	2
USA	2
Africa	1
Argentina	1
Austria	1
Bangladesh	1
Belgium	1
decline to answer	2
Denmark	1
Fiji	1
Hong Kong	1
Maldives	1
Malta	1
Mauritius	1
Mexico	1
Northern Ireland	2
Saudi Arabia	1
Scotland	1
Spain	1
Turkey	1
Total Responses:	364



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