

# Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032

## Investment Plan





# Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032 Investment Plan

## For more information contact

System Policy Branch, Strategy, Policy and Reform Division, Queensland Health, GPO Box 48, Brisbane QLD 4001

Email: [WomensHealthStrategy@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:WomensHealthStrategy@health.qld.gov.au)

Published by the State of Queensland (Queensland Health), March 2024. This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit [creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au)

© State of Queensland (Queensland Health) 2024



You are free to copy, communicate and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the State of Queensland (Queensland Health).

## General Acknowledgement

The Queensland Government acknowledges the Queenslanders who informed the *Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032*. The work of everyone who contributed to the Strategy is greatly appreciated.

We heard from a wide variety of groups including government agencies, health professionals, representatives from the community sector, industry, and advocates. Many women and girls shared their personal experiences. These voices are central to improving the health of all women and girls in Queensland.

Queensland Health is committed to its obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2019*, including the protection of families and children. As part of any projects or actions related to the Strategy, Queensland Health will protect and promote human rights, promote a dialogue about the practical application of human rights, and help to build a culture in the Queensland public sector that promotes human rights.

## Disclaimer

*The content presented in this publication is distributed by the Queensland Government as an information source only. The State of Queensland makes no statements, representations or warranties about the accuracy, completeness or reliability of any information contained in this publication. The State of Queensland disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation for liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason reliance was placed on such information.*

## Content warning

This Strategy includes references to women and girls' negative healthcare experiences, domestic and family violence, and sexual violence, and personal views. The contents of this document may trigger negative feelings for some readers.

If you or another person wishes to seek support or advice, please contact:

- 1800RESPECT ([www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)) on 1800 737 732 (24/7 telephone and online crisis support for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence)
- Lifeline ([www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)) on 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention)
- QLife ([www qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)) on 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight daily LGBTQ+ telephone and webchat peer support to discuss sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships)

# Acknowledgement of Country

The Queensland Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nations peoples in Queensland as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, waters and seas. We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as two unique and diverse peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, resilience and strengths.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls who have been the bearers of strength, love and determination within their families and communities for generations. We acknowledge the proud female leaders who, in the midst of harsh adversity, have stood in the gap for their communities, to provide a safe refuge for those who needed it. We acknowledge the First Nations women who pioneered cultural safety, equity, and justice in healthcare and those who have paved a way for the First Nations health workforce.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and value the culture, traditions and contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have made to our communities. We recognise that our collective responsibility as government, communities and individuals is to ensure equity and equality, and the recognition and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland in every aspect of our society.

We acknowledge and thank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls in Queensland for their strength and resilience, including, those who have contributed to the development of the *Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032*.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this publication may contain the names and/or images of deceased people.





# Contents

<b>A message from the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Our aim</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Our principles</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Our priority health action areas</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>System reform goals</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>New investment overview</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>New investment in women and girls' health</b>	<b>12</b>
System reform	14
Healthy lifestyles and bodies	16
Sexual and reproductive health	17
Mental health and wellbeing	18
Health response to domestic and family violence, and sexual violence	19
Maternal health	20
Chronic health conditions and cancer	21
<b>Existing investment</b>	<b>22</b>
System reform	24
Healthy lifestyles and bodies	25
Sexual and reproductive health	26
Mental health and wellbeing	27
Health response to domestic and family violence, and sexual violence	28
Maternal health	29
Chronic health conditions and cancer	30

# Foreword

## A message from the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women



**Hon Shannon Fentiman MP**

*Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women*

The *Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032* is the government's commitment to meeting the health needs of women, addressing the social determinants of women and girls' health, and improving health equity.

It recognises that improving the safety, health and wellbeing of Queensland women and girls is the foundation to ensuring that they are empowered to achieve gender equality and economic security.

The Strategy builds on existing programs and investment for a gender-equal Queensland. I recognise that investment in women and girls' health is critical to the prosperity of Queensland communities and our State.

To help ensure that this Strategy delivers real change, a range of targeted women and girls' health initiatives have been identified as priorities for investment. These signature initiatives are set out in this Investment Plan.

With a new injection of \$250 million over the period to 2027-28 to address gender-based health inequity, the Government is rectifying disinvestment and underinvestment in women and girls' health. The Government is anticipated to spend more than \$1 billion over the next 5 years on women and girls' health and wellbeing programs and new services to better meet their needs.

Our investment in women and girls' health initiatives is supported by the strong evidence base outlined in the Strategy. For example, the prevalence of endometriosis is higher among young women now than in the previous generation and higher in Queensland than Australia overall. This is why we're establishing dedicated pelvic pain services and providing scholarships to support education of health professionals.

Women and girls have told us that in many cases, the health system and those in it, misdiagnose or dismiss their concerns. To change this, we are delivering integrated women's health hubs in accessible locations for women and girls. We are also implementing nurse-led walk-in clinics and social workers to support linkages between health services and improve access to health professionals who have a strong understanding of women and girls' health issues.

Women and girls have told us they want easy-to-read information and access to advice about their health and wellbeing. That is why we are developing a revitalised women and girls' health website and resources. New women's health promotion officers will enable communities of women and girls to focus on their health early, seek screening and develop healthy lifestyles and bodies.

I recognise how important starting a family is for many Queenslanders and that often, cost prohibits equal access to fertility treatment. That is why I am proud to announce the establishment of free fertility preservation services and Queensland's first publicly-funded assisted reproductive technology service to support Queenslanders with complex medical needs, for example, those undergoing cancer treatment.

I encourage you to seek out details of even more initiatives in this Investment Plan.

We have listened to Queensland women and girls from across our State to understand the barriers to accessing appropriate healthcare and the importance of place-based care provided in the community.

We thank the thousands of Queenslanders who shared their experiences and ideas with us during the extensive consultation process.

This Investment Plan demonstrates the government's commitment to improving the health of women and girls in Queensland into the future.

**Our aim is that all Queensland women and girls are well and healthy throughout their lives and can participate in social, economic and cultural activities.**



## Our principles

### Human rights



Uphold the human right of all women and girls to access high-quality health care without discrimination

### Determinants of health



Address the cultural, social, environmental, commercial and economic factors that influence the health and wellbeing of women and girls

### Women and girls' voices



Listen to the voices of women and girls and respond with dignity and empathy

### Co-design and collaboration



Work with women and girls to co-design and implement health initiatives alongside their communities, health care providers and partners

### First Nations health and healing



Provide culturally safe and appropriate care, free from racism, that enables health, healing and reconciliation with First Nations communities, respecting lived experience and cultural authority

### Clinical and cultural safety



Provide safe, world-class care to all women and girls, with respect for their individual needs, experiences and values

### Life course approach



Protect, promote and celebrate the health and wellbeing of women and girls at all stages of life

### Health equity



Achieve equitable health outcomes for all women and girls, especially those from priority communities



# Our priority health action areas

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting all women and girls to reach their full health potential.

This means ensuring that all women and girls have access to information, services and support that helps them to look after their health throughout their lifetime.

<p><b>Healthy lifestyles and bodies</b></p>  <p>Queensland women and girls are supported to maintain healthy lifestyles, behaviours, body weight and positive body image.</p>	<p><b>Health response to domestic and family violence, and sexual violence</b></p>  <p>Queensland women and girls experiencing domestic and family violence, and sexual violence have access to sensitive, trauma-informed and culturally safe health care.</p>
<p><b>Sexual and reproductive health</b></p>  <p>Reproductive and sexual health of Queensland women and girls is optimised across their life course.</p>	<p><b>Maternal health</b></p>  <p>Queensland mothers and babies are healthy and cared for close to home and community.</p>
<p><b>Mental health and wellbeing</b></p>  <p>Queensland women and girls experience enhanced mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Chronic health conditions and cancer</b></p>  <p>Queensland women and girls live longer, healthier lives and are supported to prevent and manage chronic conditions.</p>

# System reform goals

## Enhance the health of priority communities

The health system better responds to the needs of priority communities of women and girls through provision of culturally safe care and co-design of services to address barriers to access, eliminate discrimination and institutional racism and ultimately achieve health equity.

## Increase prevention and early intervention

Investment in prevention and early intervention is prioritised so that women and girls' health is supported throughout their lives.

## Improve health literacy

Health information and support are accessible, easy to understand and available early and at the right time and considers using technology to support accessibility.

## Increase access to gender-informed, integrated and equitable care

All levels of government and health service providers work together to ensure quality care is coordinated, funded and accessible at all stages of life and considers the factors that influence health.

## Continue to develop an informed and trusted workforce

The health workforce provides quality care that is culturally safe, gender-informed, trauma-informed, and safe, and represents, respects and responds to diverse needs and groups of women and girls.


## Build a strong evidence base


Data collection and research are improved and used to understand and respond to the changing needs of all women and girls.


## Priority communities of women and girls


Priority communities in our Strategy refers to women and girls of all ages with diverse backgrounds and experiences who may face additional barriers to accessing health care. This includes:

- 

**First Nations women and girls**
- 

**Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and girls**
- 

**Women and girls with disability**
- 

**Members of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) communities**
- 

**Women and girls living in rural and remote areas**
- 

**Women and girls in contact with the justice system, including women in custody**

















# New investment overview

New initiatives will build on existing investments to work towards health equity for all women and girls by linking to our aim: **All Queensland women and girls are well and healthy throughout their lives and can participate in social, economic and cultural activities.**

With this new investment of nearly \$250 million over the period to 2027-28 to address health inequity for women and girls, the Government is anticipated to spend more than \$1 billion over the next 5 years on women and girls' health and wellbeing programs and new services to better meet their needs.

-  System reform
-  Healthy lifestyles and bodies
-  Sexual and reproductive health
-  Mental health and wellbeing
-  Health response to domestic and family violence, and sexual violence
-  Maternal health
-  Chronic health conditions and cancer

Action area/s	Headline initiatives	Total to 2027-28
	Implement a pilot of <b>integrated women's health hubs</b> in two community-based locations, including a First Nations designed and led service in North Queensland, to provide accessible, quality, culturally-safe, gender-informed and trauma-informed support for health and social issues to priority communities of women and girls	<b>\$20.41m</b>
	Commence the <b>co-design of a statewide model of care</b> with key stakeholders and Hospital and Health Services, based on learnings and benefits identified in pilot services, for future integrated women's health hubs in the community to target priority communities of women and girls	<b>\$0.29m</b>
	Identify and support <b>research priorities for women and girls' health</b> that enables the development of evidence-based models of care	<b>\$1.27m</b>
	Provide <b>information and clinical advice via 13 HEALTH</b> phone and online channels to increase access to women-centred information and to direct women and girls to local services, including referrals for counselling	<b>\$6.58m</b>
	Implement a <b>statewide model of affirming care for LGBTIQ+, Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities</b> in Queensland, delivered through a combination of face-to-face, online and telehealth, to provide targeted support for LGBTIQ+ people with physical and mental ill health and associated reduced psychosocial functioning	<b>\$6.84m</b>
	Design and implement <b>four nurse-led walk-in clinics</b> to support improved access to care including after hours	<b>\$46.10m</b>
	Deliver a <b>Women's Health Promotion Officers program</b> to deliver targeted culturally appropriate prevention and early intervention support	<b>\$7.05m</b>
	Deliver a <b>Women's Health Clinical Showcase</b> series to promote clinical best practice and innovation	<b>\$0.24m</b>
	<b>Develop an evaluation framework</b> for the <i>Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032</i> to support continuous learning, improvement and implementation	<b>\$0.20m</b>

Action area/s	Headline initiatives	Total to 2027-28
	Design and deliver <b>targeted healthy lifestyle advice, tools and resources</b> for women and girls with translated and easy-read content	<b>\$0.63m</b>
	Provide funding to non-government organisations to deliver <b>peer support group programs</b> with a focus on women's health conditions, including endometriosis, menopause and cancer	<b>\$2.33m</b>
	Revitalise the <b>Queensland Health website</b> to enable access to women's health information and linkages to community support and services in one easy-to-use location	<b>\$0.57m</b>
	Trial a <b>health education program in upper primary school</b> about puberty, menstruation, health and wellbeing for girls	<b>\$2.96m</b>
	Develop and consult on a <b>statewide public fertility preservation service</b> for people with cancer and/or complex medical conditions	<b>\$0.30m</b>
	Implement a <b>statewide public fertility preservation service</b> for people with cancer and/or complex medical conditions	<b>\$9.90m</b>
	Provide access to <b>assisted reproductive technologies</b> , including in vitro fertilisation (IVF), to people with complex medical conditions, with the availability of counselling to support women and their families	<b>\$32.12m</b>
	Implement <b>additional supports to deliver the Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan</b>	<b>\$41.80m</b>
	Design and build a <b>donor register for donor conceived people</b>	<b>\$2.00m</b>
	Provide therapeutic <b>counselling and support for women and girls' mental health and wellbeing</b> through virtual and telephone services in partnership with community-based providers, including support for miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death	<b>\$12.11m</b>
	Provide funding for <b>social workers to provide mental health support for vulnerable women</b> , including women experiencing domestic and family violence, and sexual violence	<b>\$26.95m</b>
	Support <b>skill maintenance and upskilling of regional midwives</b> via rotations to the Mater Hospital in Brisbane for hands-on experience and exposure to complex patient care	<b>\$3.54m</b>
	Deliver <b>multidisciplinary outreach training in neonatal stabilisation (NEOREST) for maternity staff</b> , complemented by online resources	<b>\$0.52m</b>
	Deliver <b>'Better births with consent' workshops</b> provided by the Maternity Consumer Network to Queensland Health maternity care professionals	<b>\$0.34m</b>
	Develop a <b>service model for pelvic pain and endometriosis</b> for Queensland	<b>\$0.30m</b>
	Develop a suite of statewide <b>pelvic health clinical guidelines</b> that provide guidance to clinicians in a range of settings	<b>\$0.75m</b>
	Provide improved access to <b>advanced clinical, surgical and rehabilitation services</b> for persistent pelvic pain, including care for endometriosis	<b>\$13.68m</b>
	Provide <b>scholarships for nurse training</b> in pelvic pain management via the Australian College of Nursing	<b>\$0.57m</b>
	Provide <b>scholarships for physiotherapists</b> to undertake pelvic health qualifications	<b>\$0.57m</b>



# New investment in women and girls' health

We have heard from many women and girls, organisations and other stakeholders about what is needed to support women and girls to be healthier for longer. These new initiatives target women and girls of all ages, particularly from priority communities.





# System reform

Through this Strategy, we will lead purposeful change through system reform. This means turning what we've heard into what we will do.

Together, we can create cultural change at all levels to deliver gender-responsive, trauma-informed and non-judgemental care in all settings.

Women and girls of all ages and identities told us they need to see health practitioners who listen to and support them, and they want a choice in when, where and how they receive quality care. They want safe spaces at convenient locations and easy-to-understand health information.

An ideal health system respects and responds to women and girls' unique circumstances and understands the barriers they face. It acknowledges the many social, cultural and commercial factors that impact on health and leverages the strengths of the community.

Through enabling access to prevention and early intervention, women and girls will be healthier for longer, which will reduce health system pressures.

Collecting the right data and conducting more gender-specific health research will help us to know how to best care for women and girls at all stages of life.

The Strategy will be evaluated to ensure initiatives address health inequities and improve the health outcomes and experiences of all women and girls in Queensland.

New initiative	Why
Implement a pilot of <b>integrated women's health hubs</b> in two community-based locations, including a First Nations designed and led service in North Queensland, to provide accessible, quality, culturally-safe, gender-informed and trauma-informed support for health and social issues to priority communities of women and girls	Co-design of services with the local community and key stakeholders will ensure new services effectively meet the needs of women and girls. Place-based integrated women's health hubs will address barriers to accessing health care and enable access to gender and trauma-informed, early care closer to home. This will improve women and girls' long-term health outcomes and may mean that women and girls can access care in the community instead of in tertiary services, reducing demand on hospitals.
Commence the <b>co-design of a statewide model of care</b> with key stakeholders and Hospital and Health Services, based on learnings and benefits identified in pilot services, for future integrated women's health hubs in the community to target priority communities of women and girls	

New initiative	Why
Identify and support <b>research priorities for women and girls' health</b> that enables the development of evidence-based models of care	Improved research into women's health issues in Queensland and improved data collection will enable the development of evidence-based models of care for women and girls into the future.
Provide <b>information and clinical advice via 13 HEALTH</b> phone and online channels to increase access to women-centred information and to direct women and girls to local services, including referrals for counselling	Women and girls, particularly from priority communities, often find it difficult to know where and how to access reliable health services. For women and girls in regional, rural and remote areas, there may be a lack of physical access to women's health services.  We will expand multi-channel services and provide a central point of contact for people to receive gendered information to improve health system navigation and increase access to more timely advice. Women and girls will also be supported through referrals to existing services for personalised advice and support, such as counselling and psychosocial support.
Implement a <b>statewide model of affirming care for LGBTIQ+, Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities</b> in Queensland, delivered through a combination of face-to-face, online and telehealth, to provide targeted support for LGBTIQ+ people with physical and mental ill health and associated reduced psychosocial functioning	Members of LGBTIQ+ communities continue to face worse health outcomes, including poor mental health, compared to the general population and face additional barriers to accessing care, particularly in rural and remote areas.  Virtual and community-based affirming care, counselling and navigation support will provide timely assistance to people with physical and mental ill health to live safely, independently and productively. This will support improved quality of life and seek to help reduce high suicide and attempted suicide rates.
Design and implement <b>four nurse-led walk-in clinics</b> to support improved access to care, including after hours	Identified barriers for women and girls include inability to access services outside of business hours, high costs in a cost-of-living crisis, and lack of trauma-informed women-focused services.  Gendered walk-in clinics will help to reduce the burden on tertiary, emergency department and Satellite Hospital care and enable options for women and girls to access early health care to improve long-term health outcomes. Walk-in clinics will be evaluated to shape best practice standards for providing women centered care that is easily accessible, including outside of ordinary business hours.
Deliver a <b>Women's Health Promotion Officers program</b> to deliver targeted, culturally appropriate prevention and early intervention support	Women and girls from priority communities can have worse long-term health outcomes and a lower participation rate in prevention and early intervention programs. This can lead to reliance on hospital care.  This program will increase preventative health knowledge and action, help reduce hospital demand, provide early intervention, and seek to improve long-term health outcomes across the life course.
Deliver a <b>Women's Health Clinical Showcase</b> series to promote clinical best practice and innovation	Evidence indicates that in Australia, a lack of clinician knowledge about women's health issues, including menopause, persists and that some clinicians more often lack the skills and confidence to manage women's health issues effectively.  Women's health clinical showcases will promote services and supports to enhance provision of women-focused and trauma-informed care, to support clinicians to provide best practice care of women and girls and help them achieve positive health outcomes.



# Healthy lifestyles and bodies

Evidence tells us the best way to prevent chronic illness is to maintain a healthy lifestyle through exercise, eating well and practising positive health behaviours.

Women and girls told us that a barrier to accessing health care is fear of being judged or dismissed because of their weight. For women and girls to be supported, there is a need to break down stereotypes and raise awareness of affordable, accessible and supportive health care environments.

Better access to health information that is easy to understand will increase women and girls' awareness of relevant risk factors and actions they can take to live healthier lives.

# Sexual and reproductive health

Women and girls' sexual and reproductive health is critical to overall health and wellbeing and is often not talked about.

Women and girls told us they want consistent access to termination of pregnancy across Queensland. This was one of the strongest messages during consultation.

We also heard many stories about the difficulties that people face when trying to start a family, and this can be compounded when dealing with cancer or complex medical conditions.

New initiatives in this Investment Plan aim to improve the consistency of termination of pregnancy services across Queensland and assist people with cancer and/or complex

medical conditions to access assisted reproductive technology, including fertility preservation and in vitro fertilisation.

The impacts of endometriosis and pelvic pain are significant for women and girls in Queensland. We acknowledge these health issues present differently in women and girls and can be chronic in nature. More information about what we are doing to support women and girls with endometriosis and pelvic pain is on [Page 21](#).

New initiative	Why
Design and deliver <b>targeted healthy lifestyle advice, tools and resources</b> for women and girls with translated and easy-read content	Women and girls asked for healthy lifestyle tools and advice they can trust. Culturally and linguistically diverse women and girls told us they often cannot access preventative health advice in a format they can understand.  Targeted resources, including easy-read and translated health advice for communities and health professionals will enable women and girls of all ages to better care for themselves to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.
Provide funding to non-government organisations to deliver <b>peer support group programs</b> with a focus on women's health conditions, including endometriosis, menopause and cancer	Many women and girls feel their concerns are often not listened to and/or have been dismissed when they interact with health professionals. Peer support programs are known to provide connection and support wellbeing.  By better connecting women to other women who have experienced the same health issues or interacted with the same services, we can provide non-stigmatising support and ensure women feel heard and not dismissed.
Revitalise the <b>Queensland Health website to enable access</b> to women's health information and linkages to community support and services in one easy-to-use location	Women and girls need accessible and easy-read health information that responds to diversity in the community.  Improving our website with accurate and contemporary health information about a range of women and girls' health matters will be vital to supporting better health outcomes.
Trial a <b>health education program in upper primary school</b> about puberty, menstruation, health and wellbeing for girls	Puberty is a significant life stage for young girls and usually occurs from primary school. Being unaware of the signs and symptoms of puberty can lead to distress in young girls.  Providing health education and practical information about menstruation and puberty-related changes will equip young girls with the knowledge to understand their own health and bodies as they grow. Early health advice in addition to usual health education, delivered by trained health professionals in schools, will help young girls to feel supported and lead to improved health and wellbeing.

New initiative	Why
Develop and consult on a <b>statewide public fertility preservation service</b> for people with cancer and/or complex medical conditions	Approximately one in six Australian couples of reproductive age experience fertility issues. People with a cancer diagnosis and/or other complex medical conditions are more likely to experience reproductive difficulties due to their diagnosis and associated treatment. There is a lack of support to access IVF in Queensland and associated high costs of treatments to mitigate infertility risks, which results in a substantial economic barrier that creates inequality.
Implement a <b>statewide public fertility preservation service</b> for people with cancer and/or complex medical conditions	A publicly funded statewide fertility preservation service and support to access assisted reproductive technologies will reduce inequality and support all Queenslanders whose reproductive abilities are at risk as a result of cancer and/or other complex medical conditions. Services will be complemented by the availability of counselling support, ensuring women and their families are psychologically supported, including in circumstances where further IVF is considered futile.
Provide access to <b>assisted reproductive technologies</b> , including in vitro fertilisation (IVF), to people with complex medical conditions, with the availability of counselling to support women and their families	
Implement <b>additional supports to deliver the Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan</b>	Many Queensland women and pregnant people face challenges in timely access to termination of pregnancy services for various reasons. Proposed legislative changes, and support for Queensland Health staff, including education, will enable improved access and expand the availability of early medical termination of pregnancy, increasing options and facilitating more choice. We will also employ more clinical staff so women and pregnant people can access the services they need, when they need them.
Design and build a <b>donor register for donor conceived people</b>	The register will support donor conceived people to access information, including medical history about their donor, upon turning 18, with any contact to be facilitated by consent through the register.



# Mental health and wellbeing

Good mental health and wellbeing is foundational to living a healthy and happy life and participating in work and play.

Many common mental health issues affect women and girls across their life course, such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. These health concerns can persist throughout life — mental health in young people can continue to affect them as they age.

With increased awareness and support, we can improve mental health and wellbeing, as women and girls will know where to seek help and feel assured that their concerns will be listened to and taken seriously.

Enabling access to early gender-informed health advice and culturally appropriate support services will help to slow down the rapidly growing rate of mental health issues in Queensland.

Strengthening the mental health system will ensure women and girls receive holistic support before reaching crisis point.

# Health response to domestic and family violence, and sexual violence

Domestic and family violence, and sexual violence can occur at any life stage, with immediate and long-term impacts. Rates of violence are alarmingly high despite figures reportedly underestimating the true prevalence.

Women and girls who experience domestic and family violence, and sexual violence and/or other gender-based violence need equitable access to trauma-informed care, regardless of where they live, to reduce the impact of violence on their health and wellbeing. Violence can also include coercive control and non-physical violence. We need to ensure our workforce can sensitively recognise and respond to suspicions and disclosures of violence.

Timely and integrated health and social support services will provide a solid framework for women and girls to receive assistance and minimise the impact that violence can have on their health. Women and girls who are experiencing domestic and family violence often have complex needs and may find it difficult to access the healthcare system due to barriers including transport, cost, language, and fear of judgement or shame. It is vital that every effort is made to offer holistic support to women and girls who experience domestic and family violence, and sexual violence to improve and safeguard their health outcomes and help them to live a life free from violence.

Pregnancy and birth are times of high risk for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. This is also a time when victim-survivors and people using violence have increased contact with mainstream health providers, making this a significant intervention point.

## New initiative

## Why

Provide therapeutic **counselling and support for women and girls' mental health and wellbeing** through virtual and telephone services in partnership with community-based providers, including support for miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death

Women and girls want more access to community-based mental health and wellbeing supports. Research indicates the prevalence of mental health concerns has increased for women and girls and that high costs, access, and caring responsibilities impact their ability to address mental health concerns early. This can also subsequently impact women and girls' ability to work and care for others.

Therapeutic counselling will provide more access to gender-specific mental health and psychosocial support with linkages to appropriate services. It will also help to address current gaps in availability of counselling, including support for grief associated with miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death. This will help women and girls to access the right mental health supports at the right time. It will also help to reduce demand for hospital level mental health care through the provision of early, accessible and trauma-informed psychosocial care.

## New initiative

## Why

Provide funding for **social workers to provide mental health support for vulnerable women**, including women experiencing domestic and family violence, and sexual violence

Placing social workers and/or counsellors in each of the government-funded Women's Services will provide women and girls with early access to wellbeing advice on-site with support to navigate the broader health system for physical and mental health concerns.



# Maternal health

Culturally and clinically safe maternal health care that is equitable and accessible to all women and pregnant people, no matter where they live in Queensland, is paramount.

Maternal health encompasses all stages of pregnancy and extends before and after childbirth. Childbirth may occur in various settings, highlighting a critical need for more streamlined care between services.

Strengthening the support provided to women and pregnant people throughout their pregnancy journey will contribute to improved long-term health outcomes for both parents and their children. It will help to give a child the best possible start to life. This means the health workforce needs to be equipped with the necessary skills to provide holistic support at every stage.

As individual experiences and circumstances vary significantly, women and girls should be presented with options, so they can make informed decisions based on what they want and need. Raising awareness of maternal risk factors and promoting practical health strategies will reduce poor birth outcomes and complications.

# Chronic health conditions and cancer

Evidence suggests women and girls face high rates of chronic health issues that significantly impact their ability to live well.

Women and girls experience unique signs and symptoms of illnesses that differ from men and experience gender-specific health conditions. Implementation of prevention-focused initiatives that support women and girls to understand, identify and act on behavioural health risk factors will enable them to maintain good health throughout their lives. This includes providing early education and access to affordable health protection and screening options. Women and girls who are supported to be healthy will be less likely to need health system support for preventable illnesses.

When health care is necessary, it is critical for women and girls to be supported by a workforce that understands their health concerns and responds using a tailored person-centred approach. Individualised gender-informed care in all health care settings will lead to better experiences and improved health outcomes for women and girls.

New initiative	Why
Support <b>skill maintenance and upskilling of regional midwives</b> via rotations to the Mater Hospital in Brisbane for hands-on experience and exposure to complex patient care	Specialist maternity clinicians working in regional and remote areas can have limited exposure to more uncommon clinical scenarios, and some lack opportunities to increase their depth of experience and exposure to a range of clinical situations and procedures.  Provision of education, training and exposure to different clinical situations and procedures, including emergency birthing scenarios, will better equip the regional, rural and remote maternity workforce to manage complex clinical scenarios, and reduce clinical incidents and the potential need for transfers.
Deliver <b>multidisciplinary outreach training in neonatal stabilisation (NEOREST) for maternity staff</b> , complemented by online resources	
Deliver <b>'Better births with consent' workshops</b> provided by the Maternity Consumer Network to Queensland Health maternity care professionals	Birth trauma is experienced by a significant proportion of women and people who give birth.  Workshops will increase clinicians' understanding of the perspectives of women and people who give birth and help ensure these perspectives are incorporated into care. This will better equip maternity services to respond to a person's needs and expectations and reduce birth trauma and the associated psychosocial and medical costs to women and pregnant people. This will increase provision of care that better recognises informed consent, improves provider-patient communication, supports human rights and improves the overall care experience.

New initiative	Why
Develop a <b>service model for pelvic pain and endometriosis</b> for Queensland	Queensland Health data indicates that women are waiting longer than clinically recommended for a pelvic pain diagnosis, which is required to access appropriate treatment. Pelvic pain can have multiple causes and can lead to chronic pain, impacting women and girls' ability to live well. Research indicates the cumulative prevalence of endometriosis is higher among Queensland women than nationally, with some priority communities being over-represented in some pelvic conditions.  These initiatives will better support women and girls by increasing access to appropriate care for pelvic pain closer to home, and also raise awareness of pelvic pain to increase timely diagnostic accuracy.
Develop a suite of statewide <b>pelvic health clinical guidelines</b> that provide guidance to clinicians in a range of settings	
Provide improved access to <b>advanced clinical, surgical and rehabilitation services</b> for persistent pelvic pain, including care for endometriosis	
Provide <b>scholarships for nurse training</b> in pelvic pain management via the Australian College of Nursing	Women and girls report that their concerns have been dismissed or not taken seriously by health professionals, leading to delayed or misdiagnosis. With increasing prevalence of pelvic pain and associated conditions, there is a growing need for the workforce to be upskilled to meet demand.
Provide <b>scholarships for physiotherapists</b> to undertake pelvic health qualifications	The initiatives aim to increase gendered knowledge within the health workforce. This will enable women and girls to access the right care at the right time to lead more productive lives.



# Existing investment

The Queensland Government has a strong commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Queensland women and girls. Significant investment is already underway to deliver important action to enable women and girls to reach their full health potential.

Our new initiatives build on the existing investment outlined in the next section.







## System reform



### Student Wellbeing Package

\$106.7 million over 3 years from 2021-22 to increase the health and wellbeing support available to students in Queensland state schools. This includes up to 464 additional psychologists or similar wellbeing professionals and support for 50 Queensland state schools with secondary-aged students to access free primary health care at school.

### Queensland Corrective Services Interim Women's Strategy 2023-2025

Focuses on equitable access to individualised care and support, empowering First Nations women in state custody, care and under supervision, and listening to the voices of women to improve approaches in practice to helping people turn their lives around.

### Department of Justice and Attorney-General Women and Girls Criminal Justice Strategy (in development)

The Queensland Government has committed to developing and implementing a whole-of-government strategy for women and girls in the criminal justice system as accused persons and offenders. This responds to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, which recommended in its Report 2 (recommendation 93) that the strategy incorporate a public health approach to prevent women and girls offending, reduce the risk of reoffending and improve the experiences of women and girls who are involved in the criminal justice system as accused persons and offenders.

### Housing for Older Women Initiative as part of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-25

Almost \$14 million over 4 years to 2025-26 to build new homes and deliver a specialist service hub as a single point of entry for accessing information and services that support older women seeking to secure affordable and appropriate housing options.

### Investing in Queensland Women grant program

Since 2021, \$540,000 per annum in small grants (up to \$15,000) has been allocated to support community-led and delivered projects that address sexual, domestic, and family violence and prevention, mentoring and leadership opportunities as well as projects that strengthen respectful and healthy relationships, women's health, and career pathways into male-dominated fields.

### Post-release health support for women who have been in prison

\$2.24 million over 3 years from 2022-23 to Sisters Inside Inc to provide intensive support to women transitioning from prison to the community. The service supports women and their dependent children to improve their health and wellbeing by planning for release, and upon release supporting access to appropriate services to address their individual needs such as health care and social supports.



## Healthy lifestyle and bodies



### Eating disorder responses

\$40 million over 5 years to 2026-27 to expand and enhance the range of services to support provision of appropriate, timely treatment and care that is tailored to the specific needs of individuals, their carers and families. This funding includes two new Eating Disorders Specialist Services at Metro South Hospital and Health Service (\$7 million over 5 years) and in the Darling Downs and West Moreton Hospital and Health Services catchments (\$6.7 million over 5 years).

### Active Clubs

An additional \$15 million in 2023-24 to ensure a quality, inclusive environment for women and girls in sport and active recreation, which could include training for volunteers, purchasing of equipment and targeted programming. The Active Clubs Round 4 of more than \$4.3 million in 2023-24 will support local sport and recreation organisations to encourage volunteers and increase physical activity opportunities.

### Minor Infrastructure and Inclusive Facilities Fund

\$45 million in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to support sport and active recreation infrastructure projects that enhance community participation opportunities by creating quality places that are safe, efficient, inclusive and accessible, including support for new and upgraded changerooms and amenities, such as female facilities and female-friendly changerooms.

### Gather + Grow Communities program and the Gather + Grow Healthy Stores program

\$700,000 in 2023-24 to address food security issues for people living in rural and remote areas.

### Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA) Country Kitchens program

More than \$780,000 in 2023-24 to fund QCWA volunteer women to support regional, rural and remote Queensland communities to improve their health by adopting healthier lifestyle practices.

### ActiveKit

Supports new and innovative products or services to get more Queenslanders active more often and to strengthen the capability of organisations in the active industry. Through Round 2, \$769,501 in funding was approved to deliver eight projects specifically targeted at increasing women's physical activity.

### Queensland Pathways Blueprint

Framework to support developing Queensland talent and encourage life-long participation in sport, including supporting more women and girls to engage with sport talent and participation pathways as athletes.

### Alcohol and other drug community-based treatment services

\$13 million over 3 years from 2024-25 to improve models and access to specialist alcohol and other drug treatment and care for women.





## Sexual and reproductive health



### True Relationships and Reproductive Health (True)

\$13.22 million from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to provide community based reproductive and sexual health services for women with complex reproductive and gynaecological needs.

### Relationship Ready Program

\$150,000 in 2023-24 was provided to True to deliver the Relationship Ready Program to educators, parents, girls and young women from P-12 and young people not engaged in traditional schooling.

### QENDO

More than \$150,000 over 3 years from 2023-24 to support women with endometriosis through a mobile app containing information and self-management support tools.

### Share the Dignity in Queensland Schools

\$32.6 million over 4 years from 2023-24 to expand the Share the Dignity in Queensland Schools initiative to:

- ensure all Queensland state schools, outdoor and environmental education centres and student residential facilities have the opportunity to provide students with free access to period products through installation of a Dignity Vending Machine
- provide all Queensland schools with free access to the Period Talk educational program and resources designed to educate students in Year 5 to Year 8 about menstruation and the impact of periods.

### The Periods, Pain and Endometriosis Program (PPEP Talk®)

\$190,000 committed in 2023-24 to deliver PPEP Talk® pain management sessions to students in years 10, 11 and 12 in Queensland state schools.



## Mental health and wellbeing



### Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Development of a culturally safe population-based Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders. Investment of \$4 million is available over 3 years to 2024-25 to both develop and implement the plan.

### Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) Mental Health Strategy 2022-2027

Supports a corrective services system that recognises and supports all people in QCS custody, care and under supervision living with mental ill health.

### Phase 2: Every Life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2029

\$11.5 million from 2022-23 to 2025-26 will include a focus on supporting people disproportionately affected by suicide. This includes young people, older people, First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, LGBTIQ+ communities, men, and people who live in rural and remote areas.

### Better Care Together initiatives supporting women and girls

- **Early psychosis service** - \$28 million over 5 years from 2022-23 to support people over 25 years of age who are experiencing their first episode of psychosis, of which a significant proportion are women. This new investment under Better Care Together will roll out a Pathway to Early Psychosis service to support consistent, evidence-based care and treatment.
- **Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants program** \$9 million over 3 years from 2023-24 for new mental health and wellbeing community grants to support initiatives that are inclusive of priority groups, including women and girls.
- **Older Persons Mental Health Service** - \$23 million over 5 years from 2022-23 to support expanded mental health and other drugs community-based services for older people, of which a higher proportion are women who have a longer life expectancy. This includes services for women residing in residential aged care and using home care and home support services.





## Health response to domestic and family violence, and sexual violence



### Queensland Government Response to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce *Hear her voice Reports One and Two*

Deliver cross-government responses to the two reports (\$363 million allocated to Report One and \$225 million allocated to Report Two), including ensuring victim-survivors are kept safe and people using violence are held to account. The health response includes:

- **Forensic sexual assault examinations** - \$2.6 million in 2023-24 to develop and embed sustainable, evidence-based model/s for delivery of timely, local, trauma-informed forensic examinations to victim-survivors of sexual assault across Queensland.
- **Domestic and family violence training** - \$26.66 million in 2023-24 to enhance and prioritise delivery of domestic and family violence training in Hospital and Health Services through boosting capacity and capability of the frontline health workforce to provide trauma-sensitive responses to suspicions and disclosures of domestic and family violence.
- **High risk teams (HRTs)** - \$2.9 million over 4 years from 2022-23 plus \$1 million per annum recurrent funding to support three new HRTs in Townsville, Redland Bay and Rockhampton, as well as existing HRTs in nine other locations. The HRTs are coordinated, multi-agency teams that collaborate to support integrated, holistic, culturally appropriate safety responses for victims and their children who are at high risk of serious harm or lethality.

- **Responding to sexual violence** - The Queensland Government will work with people with lived experience, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and service and legal system stakeholders to co-design a victim-centric, trauma-informed service model for responding to sexual violence, similar to the Sexual Assault Response Team and implement the model in additional locations.

### Women's Health and Wellbeing Support (Women's health and sexual assault counselling and support)

Funding to provide:

- sexual violence counselling services
- statewide telephone services
- women's health and wellbeing support services for those affected by domestic and family violence, and sexual violence, which includes group counselling, wrap-around support services and support to access health, housing, employment and financial support
- community and system support, including capacity building, prevention and awareness raising.



## Maternal health



### Publicly funded home births

\$1.2 million over 2023-24 to trial publicly-funded home births provided by Queensland Health midwives through the Midwifery Group Practice on the Sunshine Coast.

### Rural and Regional Birthing Strategy

\$42 million over 4 years from 2023-24 to support maternity birthing services in regional and rural locations and strengthen outreach obstetric and gynaecology services. This includes a \$16 million investment into midwife-led and midwife-supported models of care in regional communities. A new role of Chief Midwife Officer has been created to drive this reform.

### General Practitioner (GP) obstetric training and upskilling

An investment of \$0.8 million over 2 years from 2023-24 to provide 20 GPs in regional, rural and remote areas with obstetric training.

### Growing Deadly Families Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Maternity Services Strategy 2019-2025

\$68.5 million from 2023-24 to 2027-28 to implement the Strategy to deliver First Nations co-designed and co-delivered maternity services, access to culturally and clinically appropriate maternity services and building a culturally capable workforce, ensuring there are more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working across all disciplines of maternity care.

### Baby Bundles

\$500,000 to 'A Brave Life' in 2023-24 to deliver new mothers 'baby bundles' which include essential items to provide a nurturing and safe environment for newborns and connection to vital support services.

### As part of the response to Recommendation 134 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce *Hear her voice Report Two*

Over \$3 million from 2023-24 to 2027-28 (then \$621,000 per annum ongoing) to provide essential items for children and babies living with their mothers in custody.

### Perinatal mental health investment under Better Care Together

\$89.2 million over 5 years to 2026-27 to roll out enhanced and new initiatives and services to strengthen responses for perinatal and infant mental health for new parents, including:

- statewide public specialist inpatient mother baby beds
- additional perinatal and infant mental health clinicians
- expanded peer-led models of support
- expansion of the Together in Mind Day Program
- increased statewide capacity for the Electronic perinatal and infant mental health (e-PIMH) Telepsychiatry service
- implementation of iCOPE, the world's first digital perinatal mental health screening tool.





## Chronic health conditions and cancer



### My health for life program

\$8.27 million in 2023-24 for the integrated health risk assessment and healthy lifestyle program targeting Queensland adults who have not been diagnosed with a chronic disease to reduce their risk factors and improve their health. The program is currently exploring strategies to engage women with a history of gestational diabetes to participate in My health for life telephone health coaching, group-based program or online program.

### Statewide support services for women with cancer

\$218,531 in 2023-24 for Cancer Council Queensland to deliver evidence-based, client-centred support services that respond to the needs of women through various stages of the disease, including but not limited to information provision, individual and/or group-based counselling services, social and practical support.

### Women's Preventative Health Project

\$135,424 in 2023-24 for Wuchopperen Health Service Ltd to deliver culturally capable evidence-based cervical cancer screening services, including education, prevention, early intervention and follow-up support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 25 to 74 years. The organisation promotes awareness of cervical screening, other health issues and other services (for example, BreastScreen Queensland, Get Healthy and Quitline programs) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to ensure an integrated health care approach.

### Statewide Support Services for women with Advanced Breast Cancer

\$223,063 in 2023-24 for Advanced Breast Cancer Group Limited to provide professionally-led psychosocial support services to women with advanced recurrent breast cancer, extending into the bereavement period with partners, family and friends.

### McGrath Breast Care Nurses

\$2,641,636 in 2023-24 for the McGrath Foundation to provide breast care nursing for people experiencing breast cancer and their families across the continuum of care, including diagnosis, treatment, follow up and transition to wellness or palliative care.



## Artwork Acknowledgement: *Different Ways* by Casey Coolwell-Fisher

Casey Coolwell-Fisher is a Quandamooka woman of the Nunukul people from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). Casey has a creative background in graphic design and is the co-founder and artist, alongside her partner Roy Fisher, of CHABOO, a home decor and design business specialising in hand painted Aboriginal art on wooden products and graphic design art pieces.

Everyone lives differently, have different support systems and achieve goals differently. This artwork consists of different stories, from different living groups, having a yarn and discussing life.

The three main centrepiece elements consist of three different demographic groups: single parents, single persons and parents with child/ren.

The groups are represented in the Boomerangs to signify strength (structure), power (returning abilities), technique (hunting and gathering) and diversity (several uses).

- **Single Parents** - this art piece represents a single parent with child/ren with a big family/community support system.
- **Single Persons** - this art piece represents a single person, creating their own footprints.
- **Parents** - this art piece represents parents with child/ren sharing their stories and creating their own.

The semi-circle in the centre represents a yarning circle that is holding all of the conversations through the line work and creating footprints through the dots.

The background has five different sections representing the yarning circles (conversations) of (from left to right) diversity, self determination, empowerment, safety and security and wellbeing.

- **Diversity** - this section consists of same same, but different. The curved elements represent different cells mixing and creating diversity amongst one another.
- **Self Determination** - this section is strength of one's being expanding out into the world. The centre 'u' element represents a person with the tiny dots being footprints that expand out through the outer curved lines.
- **Empowerment** - this section is the notion of moving forward and up. The triangle elements represent goals/stepping stones moving upwards, the lines are the tracks being made and the dots are the people helping and supporting us.

- **Safety and Security** - this section represents the safety and security we all need. The centre element signifies a shield, providing security and safety e.g., safety in all situations, employment and economic security etc.

- **Wellbeing** - this section represents our health and wellbeing, physically and mentally. The outer 'u' shaped elements represent the mental and physical of ones self. The lines represent connection, working and learning from one another.

The wavy lines (on the bottom of the artwork) represent the flow of our lives, nothing is in a straight line. We all have our ups and downs.

The hand prints are that of our Ancestors, helping us in our walking lives to achieve our goals and create knowledge for our future generations.

