

POSITIONS: Gender Equality

Equality is a core Animal Justice Party (AJP) value, and gender equality flows naturally from that value

What is a position?

Whilst the policy focus of the Animal Justice Party (AJP) is on animals and nature, we also have positions regarding human-related matters which are important to the voting public. Voters must know how AJP representatives will vote on important human-related issues. These positions bind our MPs but are not to be a campaign focus ahead of animal issues. All AJP positions, like this one, must flow from our four core values: Kindness, Equality, Rationality and Non-violence.

Gender Equality

The AJP believes in justice and our core values of Kindness, Equality, Rationality and Non-violence. As such, the AJP holds the position that:

- gender equality is a fundamental human right and that the health, safety and wellbeing of women and girls is paramount.
- we support reforms that address the causes of inequality for women, and protect women against violence
- women should be supported and encouraged to be prominent and present in all areas of society, including politics.
- there should be zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny and all types of violence (including gender-based violence) and we must work toward gender equality and respect in all areas of society.
- we should recognise how sexism intersects with other kinds of oppression and discrimination, such as racism and speciesism.

Background

Women in Australia continue to face discrimination, sexist attitudes and inequality, both in their working and private lives. The AJP believes that all women deserve to be safe and treated with respect.

Throughout our society, women's contributions are under-acknowledged, women are under-represented in key positions and forums, and we still have a long way to go to reach gender equality. In Australia, women are the primary caretakers of children, the elderly and the home; *women spend 64%*¹ of their weekly work time on unpaid care work, while men spend 36%. Our patriarchal society allows women and girls to be treated in unjust, inequitable, irrational and violent ways. This is a systemic problem.

Gender equality is impacted by *other diversities*², including race, culture, sexuality and disability. For First Nations women, women of colour and women in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, gender equity issues are augmented by racial and cultural factors. The binary idea of gender creates issues and barriers for *transgender and gender-diverse persons*³, and in Australia *resources are not adequate*⁴ to support the number of people who seek care and advice for gender issues. All policy development and discussions around outcomes for women and girls must involve trans, non-binary and other gender diverse persons. These groups must be actively consulted and included in collaborative decision-making.

Gender issues are pervasive throughout diverse social areas including *gender pay gap*⁵, *work places*⁶, *education and job prospects*⁷, *corporate boards*⁸, *medical treatment*^{9,10}, *health*

¹<https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/australian-unpaid-care-work-and-the-labour-market.pdf>

²<https://www.wgea.gov.au/gender-equality-and-diversity>

³<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SexualOrientationGender/Pages/struggle-trans-gender-diverse.aspx#:~:text=The%20term%20%22gender%2Ddiverse%22,binary%3B%20the%20more%20specific%20term>

⁴<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-14/takeover-young-australians-are-exploring-gender-more-than-ever/100890296>

⁵<https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/australias-gender-pay-gap-statistics>

⁶<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/respectwork-sexual-harassment-national-inquiry-report-2020>

⁷<https://oecdeditoday.com/gender-gaps-education-work-persist>

⁸<https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/advocacy/board-diversity/statistics>

⁹<https://theconversation.com/gender-bias-in-medicine-and-medical-research-is-still-putting-womens-health-at-risk-156495>

¹⁰<https://theconversation.com/gender-bias-in-medicine-and-medical-research-is-still-putting-womens-health-at-risk-156495>

¹¹<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/men-women/female-health/contents/how-does-the-health-of-females-and-males-compare>

¹²<https://theconversation.com/sexualised-and-stereotyped-why-australian-advertising-is-stuck-in-a-sexist-past-125704>

¹³<https://www.shreview.courts.vic.gov.au/about-the-review/>



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Authorised by: Geoff Russell, 6 Fifth Ave, St Morris SA 5068

outcomes¹¹, marketing and advertising¹², the legal profession¹³, religious institutions¹⁴, sport¹⁵, toxic masculinity¹⁶ and at the heart of our communities through family and domestic violence (FDV).

Carol J. Adams explored the patriarchal objectification, fragmentation, and consumption of animals and its ideological links to the violent oppression of women in *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. She concluded that treating animals as products and normalising their suffering has some parallels to the way society objectifies women.

This helps explain why women are particularly prevalent in animal advocacy, yet have often been excluded from political life. The AJP is proud that over 70% of our members identify as female and the party is *well-placed to empower women*¹⁷ in politics and the animal advocacy movement.

Violence, harassment and discrimination

In Australia, *sexual violence*,¹⁸ including rape, assault, harassment, or coercion, are major health and welfare issues that predominantly affect women. *Coercive control*¹⁹ is a type of domestic violence that usually involves manipulation or intimidation that can leave a victim-survivor feeling isolated, scared or dependent on the abuser.

*Sex-based*²⁰ discrimination and harassment occurs at all ages and in diverse environments. *Two in five*²¹ Australian women state they have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, which is estimated to cost .6 billion²² in lost productivity and almost million in lost wellbeing. We must ensure women are safe from harassment and discrimination in all environments, including at work.

Australia has a *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022)*²³; it has not worked. According to the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*²⁴ (AIHW) one in six women has experienced sexual assault since turning 15 years old. Almost nine out of ten incidents of sexual assault by men

against women, are not reported to police by the women. In Australia, on average one woman is killed *every 9 days*²⁵ by her partner or ex-partner and *83% of perpetrators of family and domestic violence are male*²⁶. *First Nations women*²⁷ are 34 to 80 times more likely than other women to experience family and domestic violence. Responses must be sensitive to culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The annual cost of violence against women and children was estimated to be *billion in 2015-2016*²⁸ in Australia.

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, or queer* (LGBTIQ) experience significant levels of violence*²⁹, abuse and harassment, and it is under-reported and often not taken seriously. LGBTIQ people are *more likely to experience sexual assault*³⁰ than the general population, and robust national data are required to develop *apt responses and support*³¹.

Changes championed by AJP MPs have passed through state parliaments in *NSW*³² and *Victoria*³³ to address animals in family and domestic violence. This is significant because *1 in 3 women delay leaving*³⁴ an abusive home if they do not have an exit strategy for the family animal. Also, there is a *link between animal abuse and violence towards people*³⁵, in particular child abuse, elder abuse and domestic violence, and it is an indicator for severe violence like domestic homicide. Prevention and early intervention are critical strategies to tackle gender inequity and violence. We need to investigate the link between different forms of violence.

Towards Equity

Society is improved when women, girls and gender-diverse persons are supported, included, encouraged and empowered, and when their contribution is recognised. *Respectful attitudes*³⁶ towards women and girls support each of the United Nations *Millennium Development Goals*³⁷. *Research*³⁸ from 155 countries across almost 25 years indicates that countries with more female politicians have lower mortality rates in women

¹⁴<https://www.routledge.com/Re-visioning-Gender-in-Philosophy-of-Religion-Reason-Love-and-Epistemic/Anderson/p/book/9780754607854>

¹⁵<https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/kb/women-in-sport>

¹⁶<https://theconversation.com/the-real-problem-with-toxic-masculinity-is-that-it-assumes-there-is-only-one-way-of-being-a-man-110305>

¹⁷<https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2021.1924049>

¹⁸https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap6.pdf

¹⁹<https://www.raq.org.au/blog/what-coercive-control>

²⁰<https://www.wgea.gov.au/take-action/sex-based-discrimination-and-harassment>

²¹<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/everyones-business-fourth-national-survey-sexual>

²²<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economic-costs-sexual-harassment-workplace-240320.pdf>

²³<https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/the-national-plan/what-is-the-national-plan/>

²⁴<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/0375553f-0395-46cc-9574-d54c74fa601a/aihw-fdv-5.pdf.aspx?inline=true#:~:text=The%20rate%20of%20finalised%20defendants,less%20than%201%20per%20100%2C000.>

²⁵<https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/resources/useful-statistics/>

²⁶<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/criminal-courts-australia/2019-20>

²⁷<https://theconversation.com/factcheck-qanda-are-indigenous-women-34-80-times-more-likely-than-average-to-experience-violence-61809>

²⁸<https://www.dss.gov.au/women/publications-articles/reducing-violence/the-cost-of-violence-against-women-and-their-children-in-australia-may-2016>

²⁹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259571384_Coming_forward_The_underreporting_of_heterosexist_violence_and_same_sex_partner_abuse_in_Victoria

³⁰<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/0375553f-0395-46cc-9574-d54c74fa601a/aihw-fdv-5.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

³¹https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/sexual_assault_data_report

³²<https://www.dj.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases/domestic-violence-reforms-pass-parliament>

³³<https://andymeddick.com.au/2021/03/03/victorian-parliament-votes-for-animals-to-be-considered-victims-of-family-violence/>

³⁴https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0886260508314309?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20pubmed

³⁵<https://theconversation.com/in-victoria-animal-abuse-may-soon-be-considered-a-form-of-family-violence-heres-why-that-matters-156284>

³⁶<http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/43041409.pdf>

³⁷<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/mdg-momentum>

³⁸<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13524-018-0697-0>

³⁹<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

and children. Consequently, *gender equality*³⁹ is one of the United Nations' 17 goals for a sustainable world: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*.

*Research*⁴⁰ across 91 nations indicates that countries with more female politicians have more stringent climate change policies. Other research demonstrates that female politicians are *more likely*⁴¹ to support policies that favour the environment, and women's issues are *best represented*⁴² through political systems when women are permitted and encouraged to vote. We need to create strategies to ensure more equitable representation and access in politics, the corporate world and the community.

There are clearly substantial factors leading to gender inequality that have created a gender gap, which negatively affects the health, safety and wellbeing of society. At the current

rate of change, it will take another *100 years*⁴³ to close the global gender gap. This is a systemic problem that requires broad-ranging systemic solutions.

We must change our attitudes and actions in relation to sexism, misogyny and gender equality, by creating societies that support and include women, girls and gender-diverse persons so that they can flourish. This will, in turn, support the health, safety and wellbeing of all. The cultural knowledge held by First Nations women should be sought out, acknowledged and included.

Related Policies

- Family and Domestic Violence
- Mental Health
- Equality

⁴⁰<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0176268017304500>

⁴¹<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09644016.2019.1609156>

⁴²<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13501763.2017.1423104?src=recsys>

⁴³<https://www.penguin.com.au/books/women-and-leadership-9780143794288>



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