



Department of Enterprise,  
Investment and Trade



# Women in Innovation Precincts

Discussion Paper

15 August 2022

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Australia, and the oldest continuing culture in human history.

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

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

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

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

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## Message from the Minister

As the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, I have the pleasure of delivering state-wide economic and industry development policies for NSW.

Over the past few years, while the NSW economy has shown resilience, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has undeniably been an adverse impact on certain demographics of our NSW population, including women. The pressure of simultaneously managing families, home schooling and working from home has fallen predominantly on women in NSW.



It is more important than ever that we drive equal economic opportunity for women to have access to good jobs, and study opportunities close to home.

While there has already been great progress in addressing these inequalities, there is still more to do in addressing some of the common issues women face in the workplace. As part of our commitment to achieve this, the NSW Government released the Women's Opportunity Statement, as part of the 2022/2023 Budget.

We know there is a need for:

- Affordable and accessible childcare
- Good jobs that suit qualification levels
- High-quality flexible work
- Workplaces that match the realities of work and family life

To continue to close the economic access gap for women, we are prioritising decentralising good jobs through investing in innovation precincts, while delivering the future economy jobs that NSW needs to grow in decades to come.

The development of the Women in Innovation Precincts Strategy and toolkit represents NSW Government's ongoing commitment to ensuring there are real choices for women to play an equal role in our workplaces and economy.

It will be designed to exist complementary to the Women's Opportunity Statement, and stand alongside the NSW Women's Strategy, which is currently under development, and will be released later this year.

This discussion paper provides an exciting opportunity for the public to contribute to the NSW Government investigation into the barriers women face, and the opportunities to drive equal economic opportunity in these emerging industries across the state's innovation precincts.

### **The Hon. Alister Henskens SC MP**

Minister for Skills and Training;

Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology;

Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade;

Minister for Sport

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## Background

The Enterprise, Investment and Trade cluster (EIT) drives the New South Wales Government's commitment to economic transformation and thriving communities.

EIT is developing a Women in Innovation Precincts (WIIP) Strategy to enable greater participation by women in innovation precincts. This includes both their participation in the future economy workforce these precincts are focussed on, and their access, enjoyment and participation in precincts as great places.

Working across Government with innovation precinct coordinators and subject matter experts, EIT is developing an overarching strategy for increasing participation and access for women. Developing this strategy involves undertaking stakeholder engagement with key business, community and civic organisations and the public.

This Discussion Paper and Have Your Say page is an important part of the public consultation process for the WIIP Strategy. We are seeking feedback from the public and interested stakeholders on the proposed approach.

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## The Challenge

As outlined by the NSW Government's inaugural Women's Opportunity Statement as part of the NSW Budget 2022-23, despite significant progress in equality for women over the past 50 years, significant barriers remain that continue to limit opportunity for women's economic participation.

In 2021, working-age women in New South Wales (aged 15–64) had a labour force participation rate of 74 per cent, compared to 82 per cent for men. Further, the women who are employed are more than twice as likely to work in part-time or casual roles.

Concurrently, governments of all levels, along with the private sector, universities and research institutions and the community are investing in the creation of innovation precincts across NSW as places where future industries of the NSW economy are being driven through the agglomeration of anchor institutions, leading firms and innovation ecosystems.

### What are innovation precincts?

Innovation precincts can vary depending on their location and specialisation. They are collaborative clusters designed to foster collaboration, creativity, productivity and innovation between industry, educational institutions, researchers, and investors. This Strategy is intended to be useful to any and all precincts at different stages of their development. For the purposes of this project, DEIT has primarily considered the precincts of Tech Central, Westmead Health and Innovation District, Western Sydney Aerotropolis, the Central Coast City Innovation District, Macquarie Park, and the Special Activation Precincts across Regional NSW.

Many of the future industries of NSW are currently male dominated, including sectors where we have comparative advantages like manufacturing, resources, defence, and agriculture. This is not unique to NSW – indeed this is an issue experienced by all advanced economies and many emerging industries around the world. To improve women's economic opportunity in NSW, we will need to

increase the number of women working in these industries, and by extension, the precincts where these industries are focussed.

This underrepresentation of females is across the board, not just within developed firms but also in the startup ecosystem. In Australia in 2018-2021, less than a quarter of startups (23.7%) that received funding had one female founder and only 4% of this funding went to firms with solely female founders.<sup>i</sup>

## Future economy sectors that NSW is prioritising are dominated by men

Gender split by Innovation Precinct target sectors

Sector	Men	Women
Digital Technology		
Technology <sup>ii</sup>	~75%	~25%
Advanced manufacturing <sup>iii</sup>	66%	34%
Clean Economy and Resources		
Hydro-electricity generation <sup>iv</sup>	75%	25%
Clean Energy <sup>v</sup>	61%	39%
Mining (Resources) <sup>vi</sup>	84%	16%
MedTech and Lifesciences		
Med tech <sup>vii</sup>	57%	43%
Scientific research services <sup>viii</sup>	58%	42%
Pharmaceutical & medicinal product manufacturing <sup>ix</sup>	48%	52%
Healthcare (Australia) <sup>x</sup>	33%	67%
Defence & Aerospace		
Defence Force (Australia) <sup>xi</sup>	86%	14%
Space Industry (Global) <sup>xii</sup>	78%	22%
Agrifood		
Agriculture (Australia) <sup>xiii</sup>	77%	23%



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## The Opportunity

Addressing the barriers and increasing women's opportunities not only benefit women, but also their families, local communities, and the NSW economy. As localised clusters of industry and innovation, with diverse networks of tenants and stakeholders including Universities, Research Institutions, major global firms and innovation ecosystems, NSW's innovation precincts present an excellent opportunity to implement best practice policies from across the globe to improve women's economic participation and representation at every stage of their career, from starting their own business to occupying leadership roles in some of our states largest companies



Despite there being many global case studies on innovation precinct programs and efforts to promote women's economic participation, no innovation precinct around the world has emerged as a leader in this space. While there is already a significant amount of work underpinning women's economic participation more broadly, including the UN's Gender Equity Principles and work on Gender Mainstreaming, little work has been done in layering these concepts with the unique community building, placemaking and infrastructure strategies that innovation precincts all draw upon. This presents an enormous opportunity for NSW to develop a world leading strategy that recognises all of the different ways innovation precincts be places of opportunity for women

Beyond the development and design of precincts, the WIIP will help precinct coordinators build and share culture and standards between tenants and stakeholders that encourage shared adoption of gender equity strategies and goals. Only by actively partnering with precinct communities can the strategy truly come to life

The WIIP will form the basis for NSW to be a world leader in having innovation precincts that champion equality, diversity, and women's economic participation, while continuing to be the home to globally competitive industries.

### Case study: Stockholm: A Woman's Place

The City of Stockholm's place marketing presents strong messaging about Stockholm being the place "for talented women to thrive". In 2021 Invest Stockholm published their "Principles of a Woman's Place" to ensure that Stockholm meets their goals for a gender equal city and give business tenants and investors alike a series of guiding principles to help the city reach its goals.

The principles, which come with a set of prompting questions are:

- This is a place where women are free to fulfill their professional potential
- This is a place where women and men have equal access to resources, knowledge and networks
- This is a place where women feel safe and free from sexual harassment
- This is a place where women's and men's ideas and ambition carry equal weight
- This is a place where women and men have the same opportunities to combine work and private life

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## The Solution

Tackling inequality and improving women's economic participation is a global challenge, and while progress has been made over recent decades, more needs to be done. There is a wealth of contemporary research and real-world examples that we have taken into consideration in drafting this Strategy. Over recent months, a cross-government working group representing multiple departments and agencies have contributed to developing this discussion paper and ensuring that it aligns with existing NSW Government policies and projects.

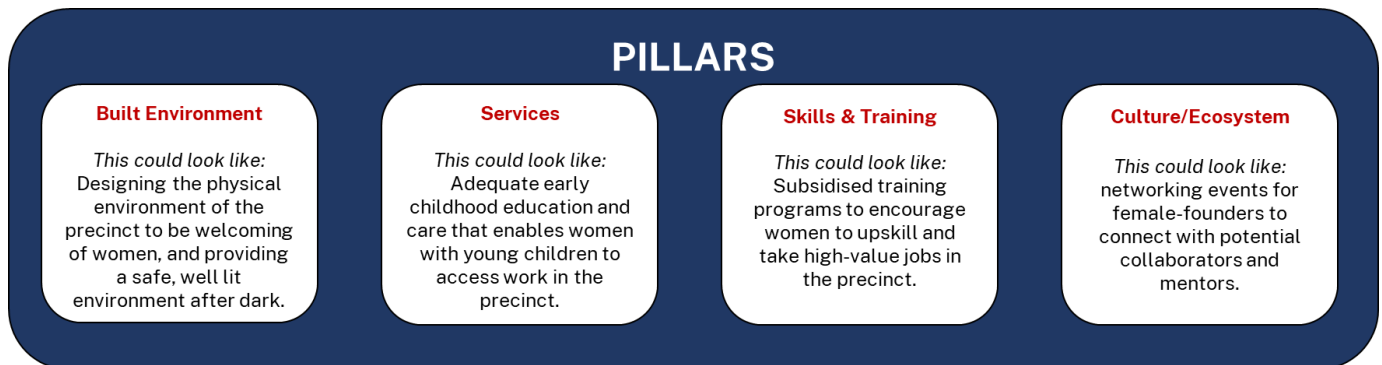
By bringing together individuals from all corners of Government, it is anticipated that the strategy would then be used to develop clear action plans by and for precincts to evaluate and increase their effectiveness in creating opportunities for women. For example, the strategy may assist a precinct in recognising that more lighting would increase the safety for women after dark or that incentivising the awarding of contracts to businesses that have clear gender equity targets are immediate opportunities for them to act upon.



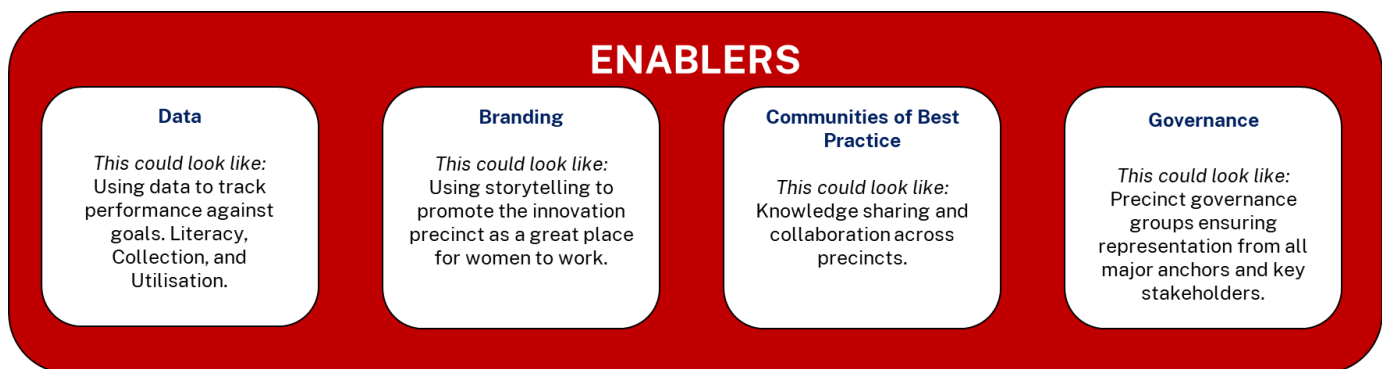


## Strategic Framework

The core framework of the Strategy will be built on four pillars, including both **place** and **people** components for a well-designed and inclusive precinct. These components remain common regardless of the stage of development or maturity of a precinct, although the way they are delivered will be different. They each contain elements that can be designed to address specific barriers for women.



Together with the enablers and the supporting toolkit resources, this strategy will guide coordinators and relevant stakeholders in delivering an impactful action plan to maximise women's economic participation.



### Toolkit

To ensure that the strategy has easy and practical application, an accompanying toolkit will be developed.

The toolkit will be the practical guide for precinct coordinators and tenants to assess their current performance on women's participation in their precinct against the key pillars of the strategy, and providing examples of steps that they can take to improve this performance, along with clear case studies of best practice.

Examples of resources planned for the toolkit include:

- A Capability Maturity Matrix that enables precinct coordinators to score themselves against best practice in different aspects of women's participation – enabling them to identify quickly where their performance is strong or needs more attention.
- A guide for data collection and directions to engage with publicly available data to track the precinct's performance against women's participation over time.

# Strategic Framework

## Vision:

*For NSW to be the home of world-class Innovation Precincts, championing equality and women's participation.*

## Goal:

*To maximise women's economic participation across NSW precincts and display best practice over maturity levels of precincts.*

## Guiding Principles:

### Women's Economic Overview Principles

- Promote gender equality
- Remove barriers to working
- Champion women in business
- Foster women's health
- Recognise diversity as a strength
- Women's safety is essential
- Leading the way in best practice

### Place Based Principles

- Data utilisation to measure and track performance
- Embrace inclusive placemaking
- A community of excellence and best practice

Enablers:	Place		People	
<b>Data</b> Literacy, Collection, and Utilisation	<b>Built Environment</b>  Examples include:	<b>Services</b>  Examples include:	<b>Skills &amp; Training</b>  Examples include:	<b>Culture/Ecosystem</b>  Examples include:
<b>Branding</b> Communications, Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender conscious design principles across facilities</li> <li>• Well-lit public spaces</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Master-planning</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Public Amenities</li> <li>• Wayfinding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood education and care services</li> <li>• Accessible public transport</li> <li>• Vibrant and safe 24-Hour Economy</li> <li>• Healthcare, Lifestyle &amp; Support Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship programmes</li> <li>• Industry partnerships: school to industry pipeline opportunities</li> <li>• Knowledge sharing</li> <li>• Development programmes and incentives for women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking and Community activation</li> <li>• Flexible work policies and work hours</li> <li>• Diverse female leaders in decision-making positions</li> <li>• Building cultural diversity into the DNA and narrative of the precinct.</li> </ul>
<b>Communities of Best Practice</b> Knowledge sharing, collaboration across precincts				
<b>Governance</b> Coordination across anchors, government and community				

## Women in Innovation Precincts Toolkit

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## We want to hear from you

The Discussion Paper outlines a high-level summary of the challenge, the opportunity, and the proposed framework for the Women in Innovation Precincts Strategy to assist innovation precinct coordinators to improve economic participation of women.

We want to hear from you on how this strategy can be as effective as possible.<sup>4</sup>

1. How can innovation precincts maximise women's economic participation?
2. Do you think the proposed Framework for the WIIP Strategy identifies the right pillars (Place and People) for innovation precincts to maximise women's economic participation?
3. Do you have examples of interventions under the pillars that should be specifically considered?

**Place**

- Built Environment
- Services

**People:**

- Skills and Training
- Culture and Ecosystem

4. Do you think the proposed Framework for the WIIP Strategy identifies the right enablers for innovation precincts to maximise women's economic participation?

**Data**

- Literacy, Collection and Utilisation

**Branding**

- Communications, Storytelling

**Communities of Best Practice**

- Knowledge sharing, collaboration across precincts

**Governance**

- Coordination across anchors, government and community

5. Do you have, or are you aware of case studies of best practice in boosting women's participation (in Australia or globally) that we should include in the final strategy and toolkit?
6. If you are a woman in an innovation precinct or working in a future economy sector (see page 4), what has your experience been like? What would you recommend for a better and more inclusive experience?

### Have Your Say

You can have your say about what is important for this Strategy in a number of ways through the [Have Your Say website](#):

- Write a submission to the discussion paper.
- Provide feedback via the ['Ideas' tab](#).
- Tell us your study or working experience as a woman via the ['Stories' tab](#).

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## References

- <sup>i</sup> Techboard Australia, Female Founder Funding Report 2021, <https://techboard.com.au/female-founder-funding-report-fy2018-fy2021>
- <sup>ii</sup> Australia's Tech Jobs Opportunity – Cracking the Code to Australia's Best Jobs, Tech Council of Australia 2021
- <sup>iii</sup> ABS Labour Force, Nov 21 Qtr
- <sup>iv</sup> ABS Census 2016
- <sup>v</sup> Empowering Everyone: Diversity In The Australian Clean Energy Sector, Clean Energy Council, October 2021
- <sup>vi</sup> Closing The Gender Gap In Mining And Construction, The West Australian, <https://towards2030.thewest.com.au/closing-the-gender-gap-in-mining-and-construction/#:~:Text=A%20gender%20diversity%20problem&Text=According%20to%20the%20Federal%20Government's,Cent%20of%20the%20construction%20workforce>
- <sup>vii</sup> ABS Census 2016
- <sup>viii</sup> ABS Labour Force, Nov 21 Qtr
- <sup>ix</sup> ABS Census 2016
- <sup>x</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Health workforce Snapshot July 2020
- <sup>xi</sup> Women in the armed forces: the role of women in the Australian Defence Force, Parliament of Australia, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/Publications\\_Archive/archive/womenarmed#:~:text=Women%20also%20make%20up%2017.5,reserve%20forces%20runs%20at%2014.2%25](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/womenarmed#:~:text=Women%20also%20make%20up%2017.5,reserve%20forces%20runs%20at%2014.2%25)
- <sup>xii</sup> Only around 1 in 5 space industry workers are women, United Nations, October 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/10/1102082#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20women%20employed,proportion%20as%2030%20years%20ago>.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Agricultural Commodities, Australia, 2020 Agricultural Commodities, Australia, 2018-19 Financial Year | Australian Bureau Of Statistics



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