

Women's Safety Charter

Safer places for women,
girls and everyone



Acknowledgement of Country



The Greater Cities Commission proudly acknowledges Australia's First Peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of what we call the six cities.

We pay respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and value the extraordinary and ongoing contribution of First Nations peoples and communities to Australian life, and how this enriches all Australians.

We embrace the spirit of recognition, working towards ensuring both an equal voice and equity in all aspects of our society.

Original Artwork by Zachary Bennett-Brook c.2022.

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Introduction



The Women's Safety Charter brings organisations together to create safer places for women, girls and everyone in the multi-city region.

Public places play a significant role in community life. When women and girls don't feel free to meaningfully access and participate in our public places, our cities become less vibrant.

Creating more welcoming and inclusive public places for women, girls and gender diverse people can improve community wellbeing and mental health, remove barriers to participation in employment and education opportunities and strengthen social connections.

The Charter acknowledges that to address the myriad experiences and needs of women, a multi-disciplinary, cross-sector approach is needed. Importantly, involving diverse women in designing safety solutions creates opportunities to build better and more inclusive places, services and cities for everyone to enjoy.

The Charter's passionate network of participants champion initiatives that are helping to create cities and places that embed equity, equality, belonging and respect for all people, regardless of gender. Its influence will grow as we connect with more organisations, agencies, institutions, and groups from across the region.

Join us in making our cities and places more inclusive for women, girls and everyone. Become a Women's Safety Charter participant.

Natalie Walker,
Social Commissioner

Greater Cities Commission

About the Women's Safety Charter

The Women's Safety Charter brings organisations together to create safer places for women, girls and everyone in the multi-city region.

Through the Charter, businesses, government agencies, local councils, peak groups and not-for-profit organisations are working together to make our cities more welcoming and inclusive for all women, girls and gender diverse people.

Our network of participant organisations lead and advocate for women's safety initiatives that influence the design of places, the development of policy and practices, and the planning and delivery of services.

The Charter is committed to working towards public places that are free from gender-based harassment, exclusion, discrimination and violence. By working together to build safer cities for women and girls, we can build safer cities for everyone.



The purpose of the Charter

The **Women's Safety Charter** brings together businesses, government agencies, peak groups and not-for-profit organisations to take **collective action** that improves the safety of **all women, girls and gender diverse people** in **public places**.

This includes addressing the perceptions and experiences of safety, from early intervention and prevention through to targeted actions against unsafe behaviour. By working together to build **safer cities** for women and girls, we can ultimately build safer cities for everyone.

What does 'safety' mean?

This refers to the perception and experience of safety, as well as feeling welcome and comfortable in a place. This includes addressing gender-based harassment and other forms of exclusion, discrimination and violence in public places.

Why 'collective action'?

The Charter is designed to be used by small and large organisations – all of whom play a part in making our cities safer. Every organisation's work is different and so each will have different and unique contributions to make. However, these organisations are all ultimately working towards the same goal, and the Charter enables cross-organisation and cross-sector collaboration to enhance the impact of their actions.

The Charter aims to create tangible outcomes by influencing the design of places, the development of policy and practices, and the planning and delivery of services to shift the thinking, attitudes and behaviour around women's safety.

Why 'all women, girls and gender diverse people'?

Research shows that women, girls and gender diverse people are more likely to experience unsafe situations and feel unwelcome in public spaces, with these spaces often not designed with them or their safety in mind. This has an impact on their freedom of movement and access to opportunities in our cities.

Factors such as age, ability, identity, social and cultural background, and geographical location also have an impact on perceptions and experiences of safety. Recognising these unique differences, the Charter advocates for the safety of all women, girls, gender diverse people and underrepresented groups through an inclusive approach.

What do we mean by 'public places'?

Public places and spaces are where community life happens. People are at the heart of this. Public places support social connections and well as mental and physical wellbeing. Inequality in who can access and use these spaces without experiencing harassment remains which in turn creates barriers to employment and education opportunities.

The NSW Public Spaces Charter defines public spaces as all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. This includes public open spaces (including parks, gardens, playgrounds, public beaches, riverbanks and waterfronts, outdoor playing fields and courts, and bushland that is open for public access), streets and public facilities.

In this context, public places may also include semi-public spaces, public transport services and privately owned spaces such as open spaces within retail centres and communal meeting places in university campuses or residential developments.

Which cities and why cities?

The Charter applies to the 43 Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the multi-city region, which includes the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City, the Central Coast City, the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City, the Western Parkland City, the Central River City and the Eastern Harbour City.

The Charter aims to address the gender inequity and spatial inequality that exists within all these types of places, regardless of location, to create inclusive, welcoming and vibrant cities.

Foundation principles and desired outcomes

Charter principles and outcomes

1



A culture of gender equality

Design for equality, leadership, champion and participate

2



Listen, share and reflect

Communication, data, reporting

3



Collective action and continuous improvement

Collaboration, process, evaluation

Impact areas



Events and activations



Data and knowledge-sharing



Transport, active transport, and mobility



Communication and education campaigns



Placemaking and urban design (safer places)

The Women's Safety Charter is based on three foundation principles:

1



A culture of gender equality

Equitable access for all, regardless of gender, underpins the planning and design of our cities, places and services.

- Desired outcomes:
 - Design for equality: Place planning, design and decision-making involves women and gender diverse people to ensure the needs of our diverse communities are met.
 - Leadership: Executives and senior leaders support and champion the participation of women and gender diverse staff to create an environment free from gender-based exclusion.
 - Champion and participate: Organisations proactively identify their capabilities and networks to lead, co-ordinate, advocate and participate in women's safety initiatives.

2



Listen, share and reflect

Communication, knowledge and evidence are key to influencing effective enduring change.

- Desired outcomes:
 - Communication: Policies, principles and best practice women's safety solutions are shared to build collective knowledge and drive change.
 - Data: Improved data collection and insight sharing enables a better understanding of the issues and informs solutions.
 - Reporting: Women are supported to report safety incidents and there is a clear, straightforward process to get help if needed.

3





Collective action and continuous improvement




Active participation through collaboration, united action and reflective practice.

- Desired outcomes:
 - Collaboration: Charter participants actively work together, leveraging their knowledge and expertise to build safer cities and places.
 - Process: Organisational policies and procedures are designed and updated in response to insights and data, so solutions are evidence-based.
 - Evaluation: The effectiveness of initiatives is tracked and regularly evaluated to support ongoing improvement.

Making an impact

By supporting the Charter, participants are making our cities and places safer and more welcoming for women and girls in the following ways:

| |  Placemaking and urban design (safer places) |  Transport, active transport and mobility |
|--|---|--|
| Our aim | Creating inclusive public spaces with input from diverse groups of women and girls . | Improving perceptions of safety to open up transport choices which enhances access to social, educational and economic opportunities. |
| Issues we are trying to address | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor or inadequate lighting • Lack of inclusive spaces after dark • Cities designed for men by default • Poor representation of women and girls in public spaces • Limited public spaces for girls (or that are welcoming to girls) • Low awareness of what good practice looks like in designing safer places for women | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of passive surveillance • Low place activation at different times of day • Safety perceptions in ‘transition spaces’ i.e. between a transport node and end destination • Lack of access / egress points • Bystander inaction • Lack of active transport infrastructure that is perceived to be ‘safe’ by all • Lack of and/or poor end of trip facilities |
| Types of organisations who can help | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations who design, develop or own public spaces • Organisations who operate, manage and use public spaces • Advocacy groups • Local businesses • Government agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport providers • Advocacy groups • Government agencies |

|  Communication and education campaigns |  Events and activations |  Data and knowledge sharing |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Driving behaviour change through multi-channel campaigns designed for diverse audiences.</p> | <p>Supporting women to use public places at all times of day which in turn makes these spaces safer for other groups in our community.</p> | <p>Gathering standardised and segmented data sets to make it easier to understand key pain points and identify data gaps.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing messages in the public domain • Low awareness of how to access help when in unsafe situations • Lack of in-language and visual resources for non-English speaking communities • Poor wayfinding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of activation • Low awareness from event staff about how to address safety concerns • Bystander inaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of reporting resulting in a lack of data • Lack of ‘gendered data’ • Few alternative sources of data (beyond Census or crime data) • Data sharing, particularly between larger organisations and others • Lack of standardised and consistent data points that are shareable • Protocols for sharing data that deal with privacy concerns are not well defined |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication/media sector • Organisations who operate, manage and use public spaces • Arts and culture organisations • Not-for-profit/social purpose organisations • Government agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and culture organisations • Communication/media sector • Organisations who operate, manage and use public spaces • Government agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and data sector |

Charter in action

Mott MacDonald, consulting women during infrastructure design

“On a project basis, our women are integral in women’s safety and design workshops, a forum to participate, identify and design for women’s safety concerns on major infrastructure projects, such as designs of new Sydney Metro stations across Greater Sydney. We work with our delivery partners in these workshops to design our elements such as blind corners or dark passageways from an early stage of a project.”

Transport for NSW, Safer Cities program

“Nine out of ten women in NSW have said they’ve changed the way they’ve travelled because they’ve felt unsafe in the past. This impacts how, and if, they choose to access services, engage with economic opportunities, and connect with others around them. These statistics are concerning, and make it very clear that we need to have a deep understanding of perceptions of safety and what improvements we can make.

That’s why we’ve launched the Safer Cities Program, working with women, girls and gender diverse people to understand how we can shape safer public spaces for all. As part of our commitment to the Charter, through this program we are working with delivery partners across local and state government to trial interventions that improve women, girls and gender diverse people’s sense of safety and enable them to move freely to, through and within public spaces.”

Cultural Diversity Network Inc., financial literacy education

“Women’s safety means women are safe in all aspects of life. Migrant and refugee women’s financial safety is our particular focus. We are working with migrant and refugee women to give them financial independence and security through information sessions and practical workshops on their legal rights in Australia, financial literacy, job preparation and training on starting home-based small business.”



Charter responsibilities and expectations

Role of the Charter facilitator

As the Charter facilitator, the Commission is responsible for leading and funding the Charter. The Commission supports and promotes the work of Charter participants, helps to facilitate partnerships and participates in advisory roles.

| Facilitator focus areas | Responsibilities |
|--|---|
| Facilitate Leads and funds the Women's Safety Charter to empower public and private sector organisations to take action | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manages Charter participant recruitment, onboarding and reporting• Proactively identifies organisations that could enhance the impact of the Charter• Proactively identifies examples of good practice, and builds and maintains a resource library• Embeds women's safety into strategic planning documents |
| Leverage and support Supports and champions the work of Charter partners and participants to build a Community of Practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convenes regular Community of Practice sessions that are impact focused and promote knowledge sharing• Coordinates Charter campaigns and communications• Proactively seeks case studies from Charter participants |
| Partner Helps to facilitate partnerships, identify opportunities for consultation, collaboration and collective action | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connects organisations with Charter participants to enable engagement on strategies, plans and projects• Connects Charter participants with one another to enable engagement or collaboration• Pilots women's safety initiatives in our Innovation Districts |
| Advise Seeks active advisory roles to raise awareness and advocate for improving women's safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocates for women's safety issues including participation in working groups, interdepartmental committees, and steering committees |

Expectations of Charter participants

| Participant focus areas | Expectations |
|---|--|
| Lead and influence Leads, advocates and/or funds initiatives that take action to deliver on the Charter's principles and outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads projects and initiatives through their work and/or in their workplace Proactively engages with their staff, communities, networks and stakeholders to understand their stories and identify tangible actions they can lead or advocate for Promotes the Charter through their own areas of influence and encourages their stakeholders, partners and clients to commit to change by signing up to the Charter |
| Partner and support Contributes to the Community of Practice and the work of others to support collective action and enhance the Charter's impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominates a Women's Safety Charter advocate in their organisation Attends and actively participates in at least two Community of Practice sessions per year to share knowledge, identify collaboration opportunities and provide input into projects led by others Takes up opportunities to contribute to initiatives led by other Charter participants via financial or in-kind support, or engagement with their own networks |
| Share Highlights Charter actions and helps to demonstrate the Charter's impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to at least one call to action each year. For example, supports a Charter social media campaign or provides a case study Proactively shares data, research, learnings, good practice, ideas and consultation opportunities with the Commission to share with other Charter participants Completes a yearly report about the initiatives and/or advocacy work their organisation has led, supported or contributed to |

Join us. Become a participant.

We invite you to participate in the Women's Safety Charter.

Every organisation's work is different, so organisations will have different contributions to make towards the Charter's outcomes. We encourage you to explore how your organisation could make the most difference to women's safety in your local community, city and across the region.

Visit the Commission's website to become a participant.

If you have any questions, please visit our website or email engagement@gcc.nsw.gov.au

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