

YOUTH STATEMENT 2025



Presented by Girls Run



Acknowledgement of Country

Girls Run acknowledges and pays respect to the First Nations peoples on whose Country this report was written and data gathered. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Elders past and present, and acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded.

We acknowledge that the feminist movement in Australia has too often overlooked or oppressed the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and non-binary people. We are committed to ensuring that the future of feminism is intersectional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives shape our movement.

About Girls Run

Girls Run is an intergenerational feminist movement creating energetic, inclusive spaces for young women and gender diverse people in Australia. We bring together advocates of all ages to work collectively toward positive social change. Building on the legacy of feminist leaders before us, we provide a platform for the next generation to channel their passion, creativity, and determination into meaningful action. We identified a crucial need for spaces where young voices can be amplified and supported.

Our approach centres on intersectional leadership and intergenerational collaboration, fostering accountability and mutual learning. We believe in making advocacy accessible, engaging, and impactful while creating lasting change for future generations.

Contents

1. Acknowledgement of Country, other acknowledgements and acknowledgement of funding

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS
ARE HUMAN RIGHTS!**

A YOUNG FEMINIST VISION FOR AUSTRALIA



Youth Leadership in Gender Equality & Intersectional Justice: young people are leading policymaking with true intersectionality, rejecting tokenism and ensuring co-ownership.



Climate Justice & Indigenous Knowledges: gender-responsive climate solutions prioritise Indigenous knowledges, equity, and address displacement, disaster response, and reparations.



Advancing Economic Justice & Workers' Rights: economic protections and leadership opportunities extend to marginalised workers, with feminist-labor-climate collaborations.

Accountability in Digital Transformation: digital policies are inclusive, ensuring equitable access and eliminating biases against young women and LGBTQIA+ youth.



Ending Gender-Based Violence & Discriminatory Laws: Stronger laws and accountability mechanisms are needed to eliminate SGBV and systemic discrimination.

YOUTH STATEMENT



As we approach CSW69, young feminist leaders from across Australia are calling on the Australian Government to advocate for several key priorities in the upcoming negotiations.

Drawing from consultations including civil society discussions, focus groups, and surveys, we have identified critical areas requiring strong representation at the international level.

We urge the Australian delegation to champion the voices of young women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly those facing multiple forms of marginalisation - including people with disabilities, those experiencing poverty, rural and remote communities, and First Nations women. Our priorities reflect the diverse lived experiences of young Australians and the intersecting challenges they face.

Specifically, we call on the Australian Government to advocate for concrete commitments in three key areas:

- meaningful youth partnership in decision-making processes
- dedicated funding for youth-led initiatives
- removal of barriers that prevent marginalised young people from accessing opportunities. These barriers include disability access needs, language and communication challenges, socio-economic constraints, cultural and political obstacles, visa restrictions, and geographic isolation.

Through strong advocacy at CSW69, Australia can help ensure that international frameworks truly reflect and address the needs of diverse young women and gender diverse people.

PARTNERSHIP AND INCLUSION IN LEADERSHIP: POWER, ACCOUNTABLE DECISION-MAKING AND OUR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

We urge the Australian Government to strongly advocate for the recognition and empowerment of young women and girls as leaders during CSW negotiations. Current language in international forums often fails to adequately acknowledge youth leadership, becoming diluted during negotiations. Australia must push for explicit commitments to support young women's leadership through concrete measures including dedicated funding, capacity building resources, and formal recognition of youth-led initiatives. This should include specific provisions for marginalised young women and mechanisms to ensure young people are engaged as true partners in decision-making processes. We call on Australia to champion provisions that mandate continuous, sustainable, and formal leadership opportunities for marginalised voices throughout all stages of policy development and implementation. These provisions must include clear accountability measures and reporting requirements.

The Australian delegation should advocate for comprehensive frameworks that support both identity-based and political representation through quota systems and dedicated funding. We want commitments that ensure diverse young women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ youth, particularly those from marginalised communities, can take leading roles in agenda-setting and implementation across all sectors - including traditionally male-dominated areas like finance and peace negotiations. These frameworks must be backed by substantial financial resources and gender-responsive budgeting requirements.

CLIMATE JUSTICE: CENTERING EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

Climate change is an existential issue that will have catastrophic impacts on younger generations, and we can not discuss it as a singular issue that will affect everyone equally. We call on the government to demonstrate meaningful accountability to young people and future generations in the CSW69 process and advocate for climate justice through three key areas.

Equitable access to climate adaptation resources, with targeted programs and funding that prioritises vulnerable communities, particularly refugees, migrants, and CARM communities who face disproportionate climate impacts.

Dismantling of systemic barriers that exclude marginalised voices from environmental decision-making processes. This requires establishing representative advisory panels, providing culturally appropriate capacity-building support, and funding community-led environmental initiatives.

The development of comprehensive frameworks for addressing climate-related displacement that centre human dignity and rights. This includes creating proactive migration policies, establishing robust emergency response mechanisms, and ensuring legal recognition for climate refugees. These measures must be accompanied by transparent reporting mechanisms and regular community consultation to ensure genuine accountability in implementation.

We urge the Australian Government to advocate strongly during negotiations for ambitious climate action and climate equity measures, recognising that young people, particularly young women and marginalised communities, will bear the disproportionate burden of climate change impacts. Those most affected by climate change are often excluded from high-level forums and decision-making processes. Australia must push for concrete commitments to address this power imbalance by ensuring meaningful youth participation in climate policy development, dedicated funding for climate adaptation in vulnerable communities, and strong emissions reduction targets.



CSW presents a crucial opportunity to be a catalyst for transformative change by amplifying young women's voices in climate action.

RECOGNITION OF DIGITAL SAFETY AS A VITAL ELEMENT OF PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

We urge the Australian Government to advocate strongly during negotiations for greater recognition of digital safety as a critical component in protecting young people from gender-based violence. Young women have expressed particular concern about the increasing potential for technology-facilitated abuse and harassment. The current lack of recognition at international, national, and local levels has resulted in insufficient education, inadequate protective measures, and limited resources to address digital forms of gender-based violence. Australia must push for concrete commitments to enhance digital safety through comprehensive education programs, stronger protective frameworks, and dedicated resources for prevention and response.

ADVANCING ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS, SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND DECENT WORK

At CSW69, we urge the Australian Government to champion economic justice for young women. As one of the OECD's most educated youth cohorts, we deserve an economy that works for all of us. We call on Australia to advocate for concrete commitments to address systemic economic inequalities, with particular focus on marginalised groups including youth asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, domestic workers, and LGBTQIA+ persons.

In the negotiations, Australia must push for mandatory inclusion of affected communities in economic policy development. This means advocating for formal consultation mechanisms, dedicated funding for community-led initiatives, and protected spaces for marginalised voices in economic decision-making. These commitments must include clear accountability measures through regular reporting requirements, transparent budget allocation, and frameworks that explicitly address intersectional experiences of First Nations people, people with disabilities, and gender diverse individuals.

COST OF LIVING AND MENTAL HEALTH

We urge the Australian Government to advocate strongly during negotiations for comprehensive measures to address the cost of living crisis and its impact on mental health. Young people, particularly young women and gender diverse individuals, are disproportionately affected by financial stress, housing instability, and rising living costs. This economic pressure significantly impacts mental wellbeing, compounding existing challenges such as digital harassment, social media pressures, and climate anxiety. Australia must push for concrete commitments to support young people through targeted economic relief measures, increased mental health resources, and policies that address the intersecting challenges of financial and psychological wellbeing.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN THE NEGOTIATED LANGUAGE

The negotiated language should particularly emphasise the needs of young women, girls and LGBTQIA+ youth from marginalised communities, including those discriminated against based on caste, class, disability, location, and migration status.

We would like to see the Australian Government advocate for:

- Clear recognition of young women and girls as leaders and partners in decision-making processes
- Explicit acknowledgment of technology-facilitated gender-based violence in digital spaces
- Clear recognition of the girl child as an individual with personhood
- Non-negotiable inclusion of intersectionality in all processes and outcomes
- Mandatory accessibility requirements in intergovernmental processes, including addressing:
 - Disability access
 - Language barriers
 - Socio-economic barriers
 - Geographic barriers
- No tokenistic youth representation, with an emphasis on meaningful leadership and decision-making power
- Mandatory inclusion of marginalised groups from inception through implementation of all policies
- The rejection of any frameworks that don't address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including colonialism, fundamentalism, patriarchy, racism, casteism, and ableism
- No digital transformation without:
 - Robust legal protections
 - Safety measures against exploitation
 - Community-led governance
 - Protection against tech-facilitated gender violence
- No climate action frameworks that:
 - Fail to address gendered impacts
 - Ignore Indigenous knowledges
 - Don't prioritise communities most affected
- Rejection of any economic frameworks that don't address:
 - Living wages
 - Social protection
 - Labor rights for informal workers
 - Protection for migrant workers



OUR METHODOLOGY

The project involved three key engagements focused on CSW69 (Commission on the Status of Women). The first was an informative webinar, with a panel of civil society experts, aimed at educating young people about CSW and the Zero Draft. The second was a consultative roundtable with a curated audience, focused on refining the key messages for a Youth Statement. Finally, a survey, with 44 respondents, was conducted to further inform this Youth Statement. Through this process, we have created a structured approach to ensuring youth voices are represented in Australia's position at CSW69.

1 Our methodology was built on three key pillars:

- Civil society discussion
- Focus group consultation
- Online survey

2 Inclusive representation: the process actively centered and acknowledged diverse voices, including:

- Young women and girls
- First Nations women
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- People with disabilities
- Those living in poverty
- Rural and remote communities

3 The statement serves as an intergenerational advocacy platform by:

- Recognising young women and girls as leaders, and partners in decision-making
- Promoting substantive political decision-making and leadership
- Supporting sustainable and meaningful leadership opportunities
- Advocating for diverse representation in agenda-setting and implementation

4 Moving forward, we aim to strengthen this platform through:

- Implementing clear accountability measures
- Ensuring continuous engagement of marginalised voices
- Supporting both identity-based and political ideology-based representation
- Promoting co-design and co-creation of policies

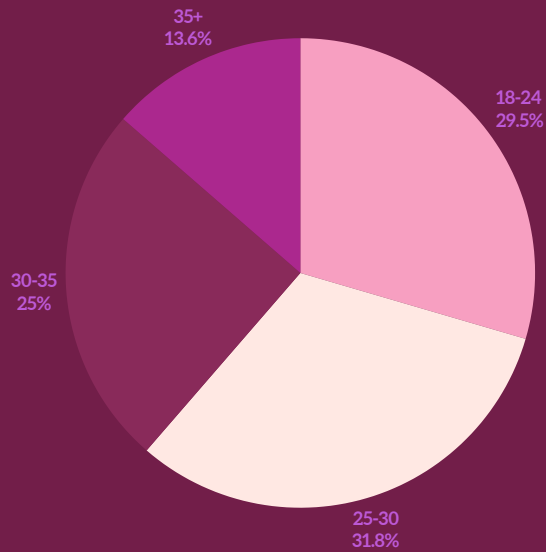
5 We recognise the important contributions made by other Australian young people since CSW68. The following contributions from Australian young people have shaped our thinking:

- [Young Women's Policy Submission](#)
- [Accountable Futures Collective: What is Youth-Driven Accountability?](#)
- [Wiyi Yani U Thangani Change Agenda for First Nations Gender Justice](#)
- [Asia Pacific Alliance Young Feminists' Call to Action for Beijing+30](#)
- [Global Institute for Women's Leadership Youth Summit Report](#)



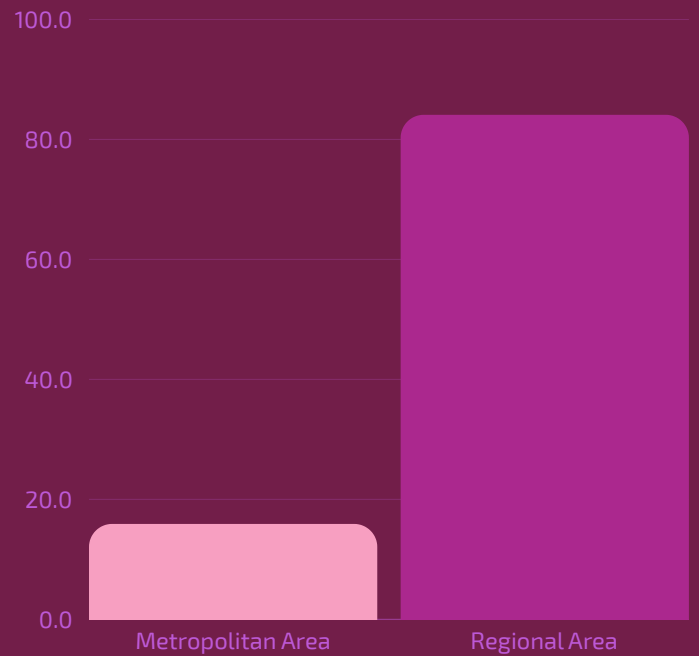
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHIC

1 AGE



2

LOCATION

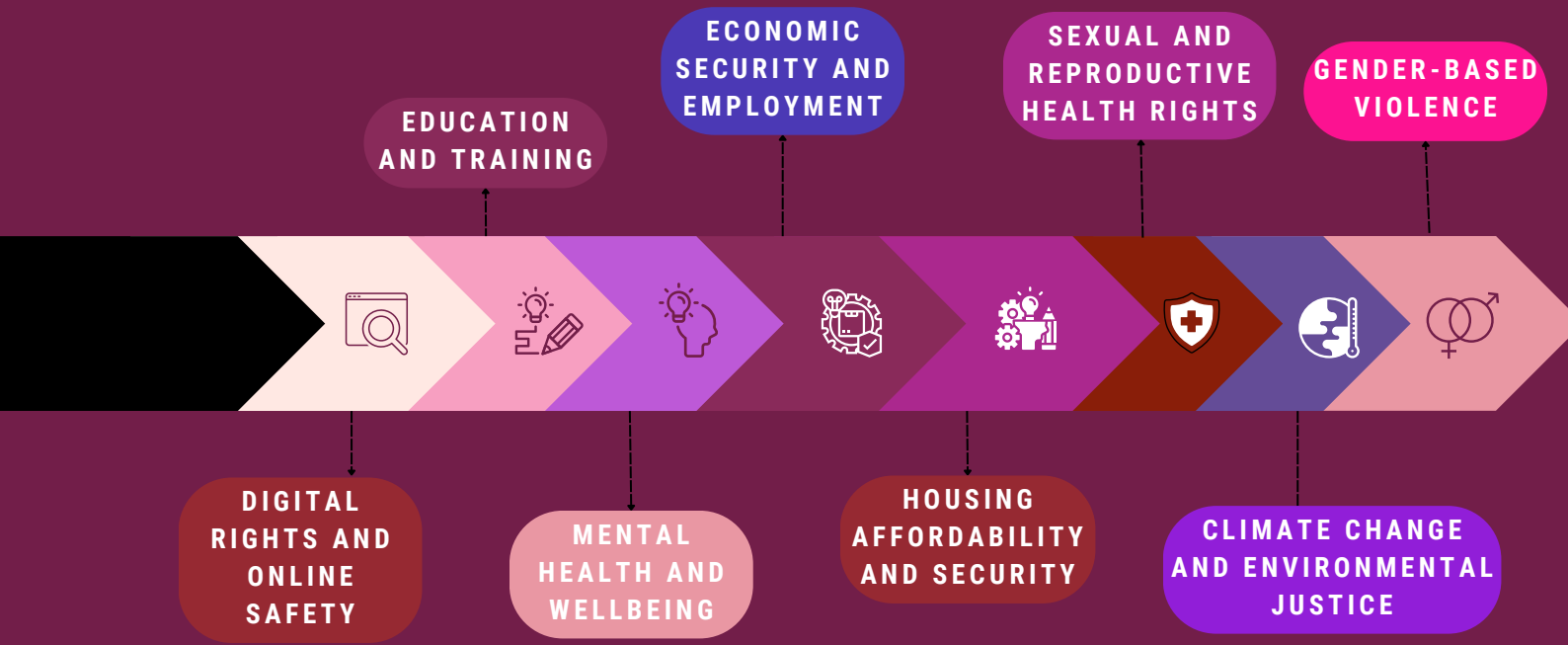


3

GENDER IDENTITY

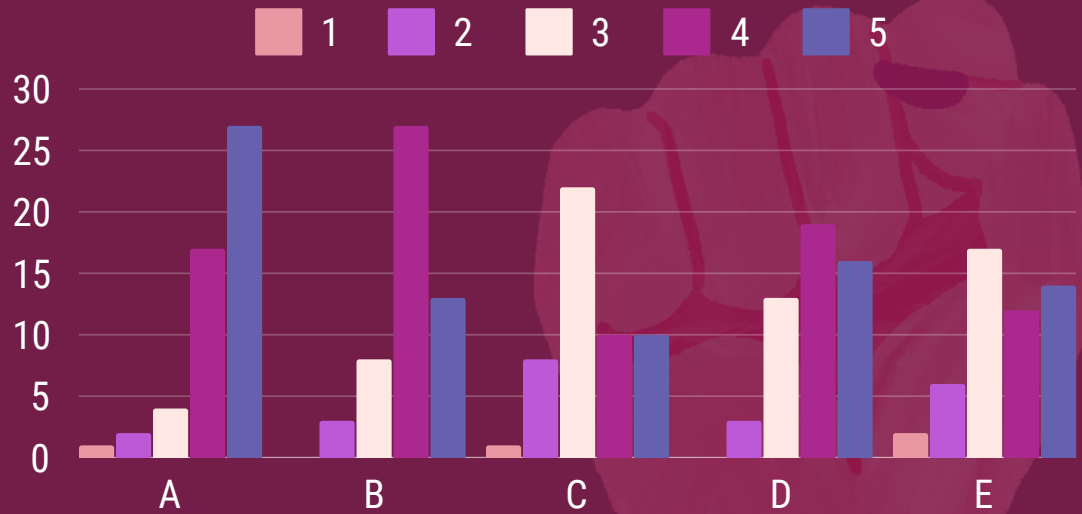


WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE THAT YOU WANT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS AT CSW?

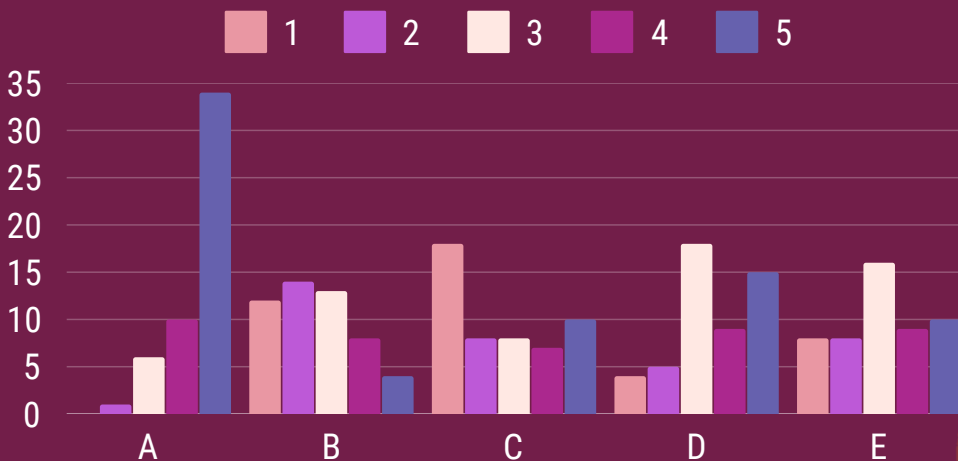


HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL ISSUES?

A	Technology-facilitated gender-based violence
B	Digital privacy and data protection
C	Access to reliable internet and devices
D	Online harassment and cyberbullying
E	Digital literacy and skills gaps



TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE FOLLOWING ECONOMIC BARRIERS IMPACT YOU AS A YOUNG PERSON?



A	Housing affordability
B	Employment discrimination
C	Unpaid care responsibilities
D	Education and training costs
E	Financial literacy and access to banking

RECOMMENDATIONS & INSIGHTS

1

Education and training

Survey respondents strongly emphasised the need for education reform, particularly around HECS debt, improving diversity in professional education, and digital literacy training.

- Reform tertiary education funding to reduce HECS debt burden
- Improve accessibility to legal and medical education for diverse candidates
- Implement compulsory digital literacy courses for ages 5-18, delivered by under-35s

2

Housing and Economic Security

Housing affordability emerged as a critical concern, with strong support for rent control measures and protective housing policies for vulnerable groups.

- Implement rent caps and controls on rental increases
- Introduce taxes on multiple property owners and vacant properties
- Provide secure housing options for at-risk individuals

3

Healthcare

Mental health access and comprehensive Medicare coverage were identified as top priorities, with particular emphasis on removing barriers to care.

- Expand health services to cover mental health and dental care
- Remove barriers to mental health support (GP referrals, private insurance requirements)
- Address specific health issues affecting women and gender diverse people

4

Climate

Respondents showed significant concern about climate change impacts, supporting stronger emission reduction policies and climate adaptation programs, especially for vulnerable communities.

- Develop local climate disaster response plans for vulnerable groups
- Implement aggressive carbon emission reduction policies
- Increase funding for renewable energy transition
- Create inclusive climate adaptation programs for vulnerable communities
- Establish framework for supporting climate refugees

5

Safety and Justice

Survey participants advocated for stronger legal protections against gender-based violence and improved support systems for domestic violence survivors.

- Strengthen laws against gender-based violence with higher penalties
- Improve coordination between authorities on domestic violence cases
- Address violence against people with disabilities through Royal Commission recommendations

6

Governance & Representation

Young people expressed a strong desire for increased engagement in decision-making processes, particularly in digital safety policy and Aboriginal community-led initiatives.

- Increase young people's involvement in digital safety discussions
- Implement Aboriginal community-led policies
- Improve transparency in government relationships with donors and organisations
- Support community service organisations through sustained funding

KEY THEMES

ONLINE SAFETY

1. Enhanced Legal Framework and Enforcement
 - Stronger punishments for technology-facilitated abuse
 - Nationwide laws protecting against digital harassment and AI-related abuse
 - Better regulation of social media platforms and algorithms
2. Education and Awareness
 - Comprehensive online safety education with intersectional approach
 - Mandatory training for school-aged children
 - Critical thinking and media literacy education
 - Parent education and open dialogue about online expectations
3. Platform Accountability
 - Stricter platform moderation and content monitoring
 - Restrictions on anonymous harassment
 - Better screening of harassment on platforms used by women and gender diverse people
4. Protection of Vulnerable Groups
 - Specific focus on protecting women and gender diverse people from online harassment
 - Safety measures for dating apps regarding users with violent histories
 - Special consideration for new arrival communities

INTERSECTIONAL POLICIES AND RESPONSIVENESS

1. Inclusive and Accountable Decision-Making
 - Engaging young people as partners in decision-making
 - Prioritisation of First Nations voices, knowledge and history
 - Including multi-marginalised people in decision-making processes
 - Diverse stakeholder engagement in policy development
2. Education and Employment Access
 - Support for education in high-need fields like psychology, nursing, and social work
 - Addressing barriers for migrant and refugee women in workforce entry
 - Ensuring equitable education funding across communities
3. Healthcare Accessibility
 - Investment in culturally responsive healthcare services
 - Support through in-person healthcare and home visits
 - Better interpreter availability and reduced waitlist times
4. Community-Led Initiatives
 - Supporting grassroots organisations for local solutions
 - Enabling communities to set their own priorities
 - Promoting dialogue between community leaders
5. Safety and Economic Security
 - Addressing maternity discrimination and parental leave issues
 - Support for those facing domestic violence and economic hardship
 - Cultural sensitivity in support services

