Marching forward into 2025

As the new year begins and students and staff return to their educational settings, we welcome the Bunuru season. This Noongar season is often associated with the colour orange and is the hottest time of the year for all in Western Australia. We associate this season with no or little rain, hot easterly winds if you are by the coast and emergence of blossoming of wattle and banksia plants.

This year marks the 30-year anniversary since the United Nation's Declaration and Platform for Action for achieving gender equality (also known as the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*).

The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome* is regarded as the most "progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights". You can read it here.

The 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* identified 12 critical areas in need of urgent action to guarantee equality, which you can view here.

One hundred and eighty-nine countries adopted the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* to improve gender equality and the importance for women and girls to be empowered.

This year's International Women's Day (IWD) theme *March Forward* celebrates this 30-year milestone.

While women have been part of the international movement to achieve gender equity, we know there is still a lot more that needs to happen to progress gender equality and equity in Australia.

Last year, the Australian government launched its first ever national strategy on achieving gender equality.

The report, *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* is a 10-year plan that looks to prioritise actions to achieve a gender equal society. The five priority areas in this strategy are:

1. Ending gender-based violence.
2. Unpaid and paid care.
3. Economic equality and security.
4. Health.
5. Leadership, representation and decision-making.

These priority areas were established after a consultative process with the public from all backgrounds. Monitoring progress of the 10-year strategy will include a mid-point review in 2029.

In Western Australia, Stronger Together for Gender Equality is a 10-year plan to build and create a safer, more equitable and just community across WA.

This year will see the state government releasing its third action plan, with 98 actions across its four priority areas of health and wellbeing, safety and justice, economic independence and leadership.

This includes:

- Free menstrual health products to all public schools and TAFE.
- *Deadly Sista Girlz* Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls to engage and empower in their choices about their futures.
- More funding grants for eight WA women's teams.
- A trial to integrate legal services with women's health services in Kalgoorlie and Northbridge.
- *Respect in Mining* program.
- Student safe professional learning for North Regional TAFE lecturers to enable greater understanding and support for women's safety in training environment.
- Scholarships of up to $3 million for up to 400 women to undertake training in non-traditional trade and technical occupations.

While the SSTUWA is pleased with the actions so far, we know that a review of the actions and implementation to date will also help steer what needs to happen going forward.

International Women's Day on 8 March will see a variety of events across Australia.

The SSTUWA will be joining UnionsWA in its IWD event, which will be held on 28 February, due to the state election timeline.

UnionsWA invite you to join us in commemorating IWD 2025 at a special event on 28 February, from 5-6pm in the Perth CBD.

As part of the *March Forward* theme, this year we will focus on *"My Rights, My Body, My Vote"*. This theme underscores the enduring relevance of the women's rights movement and aims to spark meaningful dialogue about the empowerment, autonomy and societal participation of women.

Please save this date in your calendar and we will provide further details about the venue and program closer to the event.



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