

Conducting Gender Impact Assessments in the Transport Sector

Tip Sheet 2: Gendered differences in transport journeys

The purpose of this tip sheet is to support you to identify key gender issues within the transport sector and ways to address these. This tip sheet focuses on the gendered differences in transport journeys.

It is important that the design of transport policies, programs and services considers the different needs, priorities, and experiences of all genders and their journeys.

These resources include a focus on women who identify as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+ and/ or as a person with a disability. This focus acknowledges that women across these groups face multiple, intersecting inequalities.

How are transport journeys different across genders?

Women have more complex trips than men. Women's trips tend to have more than one stop or require more than one mode of transport during a journey, as a result of their disproportionate caring

responsibilities. For example, in travelling from home to work and back, women often have to make several stops along the way, such as school drop-offs and pick-ups, running errands, accessing services not available locally and caring for dependants.¹

Women tend to rely on public transport more than men. In many cities, men tend to have greater access to private cars than women.²

More women commute during off-peak times. Women are more likely to have casual or part time jobs,³ and be highly represented in work which falls outside of 9-to-5 hours, like retail and hospitality, leading to at least one of their commutes being outside peak times. School hours also lead to off-peak trips.

Women, transgender, non-binary and gender diverse people change their travel habits to feel safer. Women and gender diverse commuters are often told that they bear responsibility for their own safety from male violence and harassment, leading to avoidance of some modes and routes of transport, or going out only during daylight hours or in groups.⁴

Likewise, women who wear hijabs or headscarves may face additional safety concerns - not only being a woman, but of being harassed on the basis of their religion.

Women are also more likely to walk and less likely to cycle. Safety concerns, caring responsibilities and perceptions of cycling all contribute to women cycling less than men.⁵

Women are also often travelling with bulky items such as prams and groceries, and for women with disabilities, assistance animals or wheelchairs as they make their commute.

See also Tip Sheet 1 which focusses on how your policy, program or service can increase women and gender diverse people's feelings of safety.

Gaps in data exist regarding the travel patterns of transgender, non-binary and gender diverse people. However, it is clear that transgender, non-binary and gender diverse people make changes to travel modality and time to mitigate experiences of harassment and abuse (see Safety tip sheet).

Data snapshot

68% of female commuters surveyed in Sydney made an additional stop at least once along their journey. Caring responsibilities were the reason behind most of these stops.⁶

Currently, only 24% of morning bicycle commuters in Melbourne are women.⁷

58.9% of Melbourne women students surveyed say they use a plethora of behaviours (including avoiding certain lines and stops) to feel safer on transport.⁸

Globally, women constitute the majority of public transport users. In France, two-thirds of passengers on public transport networks are women.⁹

As part of **Step 1 of your gender impact assessment** it is important to consider these gendered travel differences. How will the policy, program or service you are assessing meet all gender's different transport needs?

TIP: Download these tools to assist you to think about gender in your day-to-day work: the [TramLab Toolkits](#) and the [Get-it toolkit](#).

Key questions: different transport needs for different genders

Does your policy, program or service prioritise peak hour travel?

Timetables often favour peak times leading to longer wait times for those travelling at other times, who are likely to be disproportionately women. This has implications for women's safety and their ability to access economic and social opportunities. Consider the frequency, cost and accessibility of off-peak services.

Does your policy, program or service ensure people of all genders can access transport

at peak and off-peak times with assisted animals, wheelchairs or other forms mobility equipment, changing places and prayer rooms?

How can your policy, program or service consider the multi-purpose / multi-stop nature of women's journey's?

Think about opportunities for collaboration across the transport network to develop solutions which work for everyone. For example, limited off-peak services designed along radial commuter corridors will not meet the multi-stop nature of many women's journeys. Women will also usually pay more for their transport, due to their complex trips, often with someone under their care.

How can your policy, program or service promote active transport for women?

Research shows that protected bike lanes encourage more women to ride.¹⁰ [The Transport Strategy for Melbourne](#) aims to increase the proportion of women cycling to 40% by 2030 and you can find more ideas in this strategy.

How can transport better meet the needs of parents travelling with children?

Crowding during peak times often makes it impossible for those with prams or accessibility requirements to board trams and trains. Pram and wheelchair friendly infrastructure is an important consideration such as ramps, pram-friendly barriers and designated pram and assistance animal areas.

Do you have enough information to answer these questions? **As part of Step 2 of your gender impact assessment** you may need to collect further evidence to understand your specific context.

- Consider any internal data, customer feedback information or existing reports which may provide the information you need.
- Consider that women will often use different modes of transport in the one journey.
- Talk to diverse people of all genders about their experiences using different forms of consultation such as accompanying women on their journeys (see box below).

See the [TramLab toolkit on Gender Sensitive Data](#) and pages 22-28 of the GIA toolkit for further ideas.

See also Tip Sheet 1 which focusses on how your policy, program or service can increase safety for different genders.

Meaningful consultation to inform policy choices

The City of Sydney conducted a case study on active transport across Sydney through a gender lens. As part of the research process, women were surveyed online and in person and experts from councils, state government, universities and community organisations were involved in a co-design process. The researchers also walked and cycled alongside 18 women of different ages, abilities, cultural backgrounds and experiences to learn their stories and better understand how they travel.¹¹

Gender transport data gaps have real impact

In the Swedish town of Karlskoga, after a new gender impact assessment initiative was introduced, one government official joked that at least snow clearing would likely be spared scrutiny by the 'gender people'. He could not have been more wrong! Analysis soon showed that the practice of clearing snow from roads before footpaths, disproportionately disadvantaged women, who are more likely to walk, over men, who are more likely to drive. As a result of this new data, the sequence was swapped. This actually saved money, reducing the substantial cost of pedestrian accidents due to icy conditions. Karlskoga's original snow-clearing schedule did not set out to deliberately disadvantage women but due to incomplete data that was exactly what was happening!¹²

Emerging good practice

When you are considering the range of options for your policy, program or service as part of **Step 3 of your gender impact assessment**, here are some innovative solutions being implemented around the world.

Supporting active transport for everyone

The Bee Network, Greater Manchester, UK aims to create a fully integrated transport system which makes active travel the first choice for commuters. This includes delivering fully segregated cycling and walking routes on busy roads, quality signage and crossings on quieter routes and creating areas where people are prioritised to make streets safer and quieter.¹³ Every route must pass the test of being fit for a 12-year-old, a double buggy or a wheelchair user.

Removing barriers to entry

Cities such as Oslo, San Francisco and Berlin have removed entry gates and barriers at stations. This increases accessibility for wheelchair users and those travelling with prams and also creates a more welcoming environment. Evidence also demonstrates it has not led to increased fare evasion.

Infrastructure change to respond to the needs of all genders

City planners used a simple survey in Austria to better understand public transit usage. This revealed women's transportation usage was more complex and varied, usually including multiple trips a day on the metro as well as on foot, transporting children and aging family members, and carrying bags of groceries. Consequently, the city prioritised women's needs in transportation projects by widening sidewalks, adding ramps for strollers and improving lighting for safety.¹⁴

Footnote

Women/woman includes cisgender women, transgender women, non-binary people and gender diverse people who may be perceived as women, female or feminine (regardless of their expression or identity), and therefore may share common barriers and challenges.

Notes

¹ City of Sydney & C40 Cities, 2020. On The Go: How Women Travel Around Our City

A Case Study on Active Transport Across Sydney Through a Gender Lens, available at: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/surveys-case-studies-reports/on-the-go-how-women-travel-around-our-city>

² Goel, R. & Oyeboode.O. 2022. From walking to cycling, how we get around a city is a gender equality issue – new research, The Conversation, 3 February 2022, <https://theconversation.com/from-walking-to-cycling-how-we-get-around-a-city-is-a-gender-equality-issue-new-research-175014>; Goel, R. et al. 2021. Gender differences in active travel in major cities across the world, Transportation, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11116-021-10259-4.pdf>

³ <https://australiainstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Womens-Casual-Job-Surge-Widens-Gender-Pay-Gap-CFW.pdf>

⁴ Loukaitou-Sideris, A. 2017 “A Gendered View of Mobility and Transport: Next Steps and Future Directions,” Town Planning Review 87(5): 547-66.

⁵ Goel, R. et al. 2021. Gender differences in active travel in major cities across the world, Transportation, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11116-021-10259-4.pdf>

⁶ City of Sydney & C40 Cities, 2020. On The Go: How Women Travel Around Our City

A Case Study on Active Transport Across Sydney Through a Gender Lens, available at: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/surveys-case-studies-reports/on-the-go-how-women-travel-around-our-city>

⁷ City of Melbourne. Transport Strategy 2030, <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/transport-strategy-2030-city-of-melbourne.pdf>

⁸ Responses of 517 tertiary students in Melbourne, Australia, to a survey on experiences and perceptions of crime on public transport undertaken April-June 2018. Whitzman, C., Marathe, R., and Thompson, J. (2019) Tertiary students' public transport safety in Melbourne, Australia, The University of Melbourne, Transport, health and urban design research hub faculty of architecture, building and planning.

⁹ Local Governments for Sustainability. 2021. Rethinking public transportation for women's safety and security, <https://sustainablemobility.iclei.org/rethinking-public-transportation-for-womens-safety-and-security/>

¹⁰ City of Melbourne. Transport Strategy 2030, <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/transport-strategy-2030-city-of-melbourne.pdf>

¹¹ City of Sydney & C40 Cities, 2020. On The Go: How Women Travel Around Our City

A Case Study on Active Transport Across Sydney Through a Gender Lens, available at: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/surveys-case-studies-reports/on-the-go-how-women-travel-around-our-city>

¹² Criado Perez, C. 2019. Invisible Women: Exposing the Data Bias in a World Designed for Men, <https://www.invisiblewomenbook.co.uk/>

¹³ Transport for Greater Manchester, The Bee Network, <https://beeactive.tfgm.com/bee-network-vision/>

¹⁴ Local Governments for Sustainability. 2021. Rethinking public transportation for women's safety and security, <https://sustainablemobility.iclei.org/rethinking-public-transportation-for-womens-safety-and-security/>