



2026 ACT Women's Awards

Guidelines

Nominations open 12pm Sunday 1 March 2026

Nominations close 5pm Sunday 10 May 2026

(Late nominations will not be accepted)

Please read these guidelines carefully before completing your nomination online.

The ACT Women's Awards

The ACT Women's Awards (the Awards) are presented annually and have historically recognised women who have improved the status and lives of women and girls in the ACT, as well as women who have achieved significant advancements towards gender equality.

From 2026, the scope of the Awards will expand to reflect a more inclusive and contemporary approach. The Awards now recognise contributions from women, gender-diverse and non-binary people from the ACT and surrounding region who are making an impact across all fields, from sport and science to community, culture and beyond. The revised Awards now celebrate achievements that make a difference at a local, national, or global level. The Awards now include categories that recognise the impact and type of contribution.

The 2026 ACT Women's Award categories are:

- Excellence in Industry Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Gender Equity and Social Change Award
- Minister's Impact Award

Nomination information

Nominations for the 2026 Women's Awards are open from **1 March 2026 until 10 May 2026**.

Temporary residents, refugees, people with disability, transgender women, non-binary people and other gender diverse people are eligible and nominations are encouraged.

Self-nominations are encouraged.

Please note:

- Women may be nominated to recognise work undertaken as paid employment or unpaid work.
- Public servants may be nominated only where their contributions extend beyond their professional duties.
- Nominees must be at least 16 years of age at the time of nomination.

Nominations are to be submitted online through SmartyGrants. To submit a nomination visit: www.act.gov.au/community/honours-and-awards/act-woman-of-the-year-and-honour-roll

If you require support to submit a nomination, please contact the ACT Office for Women, Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD) by email women@act.gov.au.



Award Categories

Excellence in Industry Award

Recognises outstanding contributions to innovation, leadership or advancement within any industry or sector.

- Demonstrated outstanding innovation or leadership in their field or sector
- Delivered significant measurable outcomes or improvements in their industry
- Significantly contributed to cultural or structural change within their workplace or sector
- Actively supported and elevated the development or success of others in their field
- Achieved recognition or influence extending beyond the ACT

Lifetime Achievement Award

Recognises a body of work over many years that has created lasting, positive change.

- Demonstrated an extensive and sustained career with long-term impact (e.g. 15 years or more)
- Provided visionary leadership that has shaped policy, practice, culture or standards, creating long-term positive change
- Mentored and supported the development of future leaders or professionals
- Introduced innovation or new knowledge that advanced their field or profession
- Created a lasting legacy through programs, ideas or initiatives that continue to deliver impact

Gender Equity and Social Change Award

Recognises advocacy, reform or initiatives that advance gender equity, inclusion or social change.

- Powerfully advocated for systemic or cultural change
- Delivered impactful education, campaigns or initiatives that shifted attitudes or behaviours
- Created meaningful opportunities for underrepresented or marginalised groups
- Contributed to tangible social, environmental or economic justice outcomes
- Demonstrated strong leadership in advancing inclusion, accessibility or safety

Minister's Impact Award

This award is a discretionary category selected by the Minister with an annually changing theme. The theme will be aligned to the Minister's emerging priorities and is confirmed following closure of nominations. The Assessment Panel may recommend nominees whose contributions align with emerging priorities.

Nominators are not required to select this category.

Note: The Assessment Panel may reallocate nominations to the most suitable category if it better reflects the nominee's contribution or to ensure balanced representation across all awards.



Assessment of Nominations

An ACT Women's Awards Assessment Panel will be established to assess all eligible nominations and may include:

- previous ACT Women's Award winners
- Women's Advisory Council for Gender Equity members
- community leaders
- business leaders
- representatives from the Health and Community Services Directorate.

The ACT Women's Awards Assessment Panel will consider the following selection criteria where applicable:

- significant contribution that has created lasting and positive change in the ACT region or beyond
- nature, scope and duration of the nominee's involvement or actions in their chosen field
- demonstrated excellence and/or leadership in their area of impact
- innovation, creativity and future goals, including the potential for continued impact
- recognition as a positive role model, including inspirational or mentoring qualities
- contribution to equity, inclusion or social justice, where relevant to the nominee's work or context.

The ACT Women's Awards Assessment Panel can only assess nominations based on information provided. Each selection criterion has a recommended word count of between 100 to 200 words.

There is opportunity to attach additional information about the nominee or supporting material such as personal references, resumes, newspaper articles or a statement from the nominee.

To support the ACT Women's Awards Assessment Panel, HCSD may:

- contact all nominees to request a profile or biography including a photograph and seek their consent for media promotion
- contact referees of shortlisted nominees to request supporting information and to endorse the nomination
 - note: contact regarding a reference check does not signify that an applicant is a finalist
- consider information provided by reference checks to better understand the application, the impact of the nominee's work or to test claims.
- conduct an internet and social media search on shortlisted nominees as part of a checking process.

The 2026 ACT Women's Awards Ceremony will take place on **3 September 2026**.



The ACT Women's Honour Roll

The ACT Women's Honour Roll (the Honour Roll) is a digital compilation of female recipients of the following awards since ACT self-government began in 1988:

- ACT Women's Awards
- ACT Australian of the Year Awards
- ACT Citizen of the Year Awards
- ACT Scientist of the Year
- Canberra Young Citizen of the Year Awards, and
- The Honour Walk.

Winners of the ACT Women's Awards and female award recipients of other ACT award ceremonies are automatic inductees to the Honour Roll and will be recognised at the Awards ceremony.

The Honour Roll list is updated annually.

Need help or more Information?

If you need assistance or have any enquiries about the Women's Awards, please contact the Office for Women by email women@act.gov.au.

Further information on the Women's Awards, including information on previous winners can also be found on the ACT Government website at: www.act.gov.au/community/honours-and-awards/act-woman-of-the-year-and-honour-roll.

