



Budget

October
2022–23

WOMEN'S BUDGET STATEMENT OCTOBER 2022–23

Circulated by

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Minister for Finance, Minister for Women, Minister for the Public Service
of the Commonwealth of Australia

and

The Honourable Jim Chalmers MP

Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia

For the information of honourable members
on the occasion of the Budget 2022–23

25 October 2022

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ISBN 978-1-925832-60-0

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Support and note on data

Support

This Statement includes information that may be distressing for some readers. It outlines the often-tragic impacts of violence against women, including sexual assault, as well as issues such as suicide and self-harm. The Government respectfully acknowledges and regrets the loss of those who have died and the harm caused to those who are affected by violence, suicide or self-harm.

Help is available. Lifeline provides 24-hour support in Australia for those experiencing a personal crisis and can be contacted by calling 13 11 14 or visiting lifeline.org.au. If you, or someone you know, is experiencing family, domestic or sexual violence, you can contact 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) or visit 1800respect.org.au for support.

Note about data

This Statement endeavours to include data and analysis to demonstrate the outcomes experienced by different groups of women, including First Nations women, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women with disability, women of different ages, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual or other sexually or gender diverse (LGBTIQ+) populations. There are, however, limitations to data in some cases, particularly small population or sample sizes. The Government is committed to ensuring data are available to help inform better outcomes for all Australians, noting that this needs to be culturally appropriate and protect the right to privacy.

This Statement uses unit record data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey. The HILDA Project was initiated and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) and is managed by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research (Melbourne Institute). The findings and views reported in this paper, however, are those of the authors and should not be attributed to either DSS or the Melbourne Institute.

The majority of the data collected and reported in this Statement are in relation to sex, not gender. *Sex* is based upon the person's sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. *Gender* is a social and cultural concept. It is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience as a man, woman, or non-binary person. This Statement uses the terms *women* and *men* in reference to both sex and gender, but the terms *female* and *male* are used when presenting data collected on the basis of sex.

This Statement recognises that individuals may not identify as a woman/female or a man/male and seeks to include, where available, analysis that outlines the different experiences of LGBTIQ+ people.

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Foreword

Gender inequality is holding Australia back. In 2022, Australia was ranked 43rd of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index. Our national level indicators highlight persistent gaps between women and men, including a gender pay gap of 14.1 per cent. Women in Australia continue to shoulder the majority of unpaid work and caring responsibilities and are more likely to be in part-time, casual or low-paid work as they try to balance work and family. Gender inequality is also a key factor underpinning gender-based violence. Until there is true gender equality, we cannot reach our full potential and be the Australia we want to be.

The Albanese Government is committed to advancing gender equality as a national priority and closing the gender gaps in our community. Gender equality brings with it opportunities for women and men to thrive, making our economy stronger, more inclusive and more sustainable. Our commitment to restore national leadership on gender equality was endorsed at the Jobs and Skills Summit, with agreement that improving gender equality is critical to Australia's economic prosperity and resilience.

The Government is putting gender equality at the heart of policy and decision making through the introduction of gender responsive budgeting, which aims to run the objective of delivering gender equality across the whole Budget process. Gender responsive budgeting creates better and fairer outcomes, and ensures women, men and gender diverse people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

This Budget is informed by gender impact assessment on key measures – assessing policies and investments for how they might affect women and men differently. The Government will continue to embed and expand this approach across future budgets, so that we are clear on how the Government's policies and investments are advancing gender equality. To ensure that gender equality is at the core of policy development and implementation across the Commonwealth, the Government is strengthening and empowering the Office for Women and building capability across the Australian Public Service.

The Government is delivering a Budget that works for all Australians, and the 2022–23 Women's Budget Statement (the statement) demonstrates the Government's commitment to advancing gender equality and its commitment to building a better future for people in Australia. The statement outlines responsible and targeted investments to advance economic equality, end gender-based violence, and support the health and wellbeing of people in Australia with a particular focus on prioritising women's healthcare across the health system. These investments are a critical first step to a fairer Australia.

Affordable and accessible early childhood education and care is critical social infrastructure that supports gender equality. The Government is investing \$4.7 billion over 4 years from 2022–23 to implement its *Plan for Cheaper Child Care* that will make early childhood education more affordable, reduce barriers to women's workforce participation and support children's development. Further, the Government will invest \$531.6 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to support more equitable distribution of work and care between parents through changes to Paid Parental Leave.

Everyone deserves to live free from violence. Gender inequality is a primary driver of gender-based violence through the unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunity. That is why the Government will make a record Commonwealth investment of \$1.7 billion over 6 years to end violence against women and children so that women are safe at home, in the community and at work. The Government is working with all jurisdictions to address gender-based violence through the implementation of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (the National Plan).

Access to safe and secure housing is critical for social and economic equality and good health outcomes. Unaffordable housing disproportionately impacts women as they on average have lower incomes and wealth and are significantly more likely to be driven from their homes by violence. The returns from \$1.6 billion of the capital invested in the Housing Australia Future Fund will be directed to long-term housing for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence, and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness. In addition, \$100 million is being provided for crisis and transitional housing options for these groups.

These initial investments, while a powerful start, will not achieve gender equality alone. To build on these investments and develop additional policies to advance gender equality, the Government will introduce a *National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality* (the National Strategy). This will guide future actions to achieve the Government's goal of Australia being one of the most gender-equal countries in the world. The National Strategy is an important mechanism for the Government to elevate and prioritise gender equality.

The Government has established a Women's Economic Equality Taskforce (the Taskforce) to provide independent advice to Government on a range of issues facing women in Australia, and inform the development of the National Strategy. The Taskforce comprises eminent women from a range of different backgrounds, experiences and expertise.

This first Women's Budget Statement of the Albanese Government is the beginning of our commitments to gender responsive budgeting and gender equality, but it is not the end. We will listen to feedback on how we can continue to put gender equality at the centre of actions and investments. We look forward to working together as we get Australia back on track to a gender-equal Australia.

The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister

The Honourable Jim Chalmers MP
Treasurer

Senator the Honourable Katy Gallagher
Minister for Finance
Minister for Women
Minister for the Public Service

Overview

The Government is committed to the equality of all Australians, and ensuring no Australian is left behind simply because of their gender. The case for gender equality is clear – it is good for individuals, for society and the economy. The 2022–23 October Budget includes significant commitments and investments to support structural changes to systematically advance gender equality and further strengthen the Australian economy. It delivers more affordable child care, expands Paid Parental Leave, amends workplace relations laws to help narrow the gender pay gap and increases funding to end violence against women.

The 2022–23 October Women’s Budget Statement (the statement) reflects the Government’s commitments to delivering proactive, long-term change to advance gender equality. It outlines a range of initiatives aimed at ‘moving the dial’ through an overarching commitment to advance gender equality, under which there is a focus on 3 key themes:

- women’s economic equality
- ending violence against women
- gender equality, health and wellbeing.

These themes are interconnected and should not be considered in isolation. Financial insecurity, for example, can impact a woman’s decision or options to leave a violent relationship. Violence can have devastating health impacts and diminish a woman’s capacity to participate in the workforce and progress in her career. Certain women’s health issues – such as endometriosis and menopause – can affect workforce participation. Time out of the workforce and the gender pay gap can have a cumulative impact on women’s lifetime earnings, with considerable implications for older women, including for retirement incomes. Gender inequality is also compounded by intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage, including racism, homophobia, ableism and ageism.

Advancing gender equality

At the Jobs and Skills Summit, employers, unions, governments and community groups agreed gender equality is at the heart of Australia's future prosperity and resilience. Increasing opportunities for women to fully participate in society and the economy is not only critical to achieving gender equality, it will also play a key role in building a fairer, more productive and more prosperous Australia. The Government is committed to removing structural barriers to expand opportunities for women to achieve their ambitions.

The Government has an ambitious agenda to improve gender equality, which will be further informed by the recently established Women's Economic Equality Taskforce and consultation with the community and states and territories. This statement forms part of the Government's work to advance gender equality and includes analysis on select issues as a first step to implementing gender responsive budgeting and gender impact analysis.

This work will complement the Government's commitment to measuring what matters to improve the lives of all Australians, with a Measuring What Matters Statement to be released in 2023.

Achieving economic equality for women

The Government is embedding women's participation and equality at the centre of its economic agenda. This involves addressing a number of barriers that continue to persist, including the gender pay gap, which is 14.1 per cent and means that, on average, a woman working full-time earns \$263.90 less per week than a man working full-time. Women also take on a disproportionate amount of unpaid work and care, particularly after they become parents, with women's earnings falling by an average of 55 per cent in the first 5 years of parenthood.

The Government's \$4.7 billion investment in early childhood education and care will assist in removing barriers for parents to increase their workforce participation and support families to balance their work and care responsibilities. This investment supports women to increase their workforce participation, as women are more likely than men to care for children. The Government is also investing \$531.6 million to expand the Paid Parental Leave scheme up to 26 weeks by July 2026. This will further support women's workforce participation and promote a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work within households. Additionally, the Government is also addressing the gender pay gap by putting gender equity at the heart of the workplace relations system and shining a light on pay inequity through improved transparency measures.

Ending violence against women and children

Violence against women and children has reached epidemic proportions in Australia, the impacts of which ripple out across families, communities and society. The Government is committed to taking action to end violence against women and children, so that women can live safely and without fear. The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (National Plan) will guide efforts and actions over the next decade towards the vision of ending gender-based violence in one generation. This is an ambitious goal, but it is achievable if all Australians – families, friends, employers, community organisations, educational institutions, service providers and governments – work together.

The National Plan is supported by \$1.7 billion in funding for women's safety initiatives. It includes funding for 500 frontline community sector workers to increase support for women and children in crisis, full implementation of the recommendations of the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces Report* (Respect@Work) and funding for respectful relationships education. Legislating to provide 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave and investment in social and affordable housing will also assist women and children experiencing violence.

Gender equality, health and wellbeing

Advancing gender equality is also key to improving health outcomes for women, men and children. Gender can be a significant determinant of different health experiences and outcomes; understanding these differences is essential to improving outcomes and quality of life for all Australians. Health and economic equality are also interconnected. Poor health, or sexual and reproductive health issues such as endometriosis and other causes of pelvic pain and significant changes over the life cycle such as menopause, can impact study and workforce participation. The *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030* will continue to guide actions to improve the health and wellbeing of women and girls. The Government is investing in support for the predominantly-female health and aged care workforce and improving the quality of aged care and supporting a number of maternal and reproductive health initiatives.

Advancing gender equality

Gender equality is fundamental to the creation of fair, inclusive and strong societies and economies. Gender inequality, which includes harmful gender stereotypes and cultural norms, contributes to unequal financial, economic, leadership and health outcomes and is a key driver of violence against women. This chapter includes an update on the status of women's equality – in leadership, in politics, in public service, and in the private sector – in Australia. It outlines the Government's commitments to lead a national agenda to drive change and to re-establish Australia as a global leader in gender equality.

The Government is committed to a society where women and men are equal. To achieve this, it is important to understand what fosters gender equality and perpetuates inequality, and to take action to meaningfully achieve change. It is critical Australia remove the structural barriers that have denied women equal participation in the economy for far too long. Equality for women – in participation, in pay, in leadership opportunities, in financial security – is an essential precondition for Australia's future economic growth.

The barriers to full participation in society that many women face are caused by complex factors, and no single solution will achieve change. Economic inequality persists and too many women continue to experience violence, discrimination and harassment. These issues can compound based on race, religion, age, First Nations status, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status, single parenthood and socioeconomic status. Women also continue to disproportionately perform caring roles in the home, society and the workforce.

Achieving gender equality requires action from individuals, business, unions, governments and communities. It involves addressing entrenched and harmful societal norms and attitudes that impact women in different ways across their life course, which is evident in relation to the composition of the workforce and women's participation, and family and domestic violence.

Improving women's representation in leadership positions and in our parliaments is crucial to achieving gender equality. An equal society is one where members have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making. Gender equality in leadership positions is also important because parliaments that reflect our community are better equipped to make decisions that benefit the community.

Greater gender diversity can also support better outcomes for business, as evidenced by the causal relationship between an increase in the share of women in leadership and subsequent improvements in company performance.¹

This Women's Budget Statement provides a snapshot of the current situation for women in Australia. It is an initial step as part of the Government's work to advance gender equality, including through the implementation of gender responsive budgeting, which will be rolled out over future budgets. Key next steps include further supporting policy-makers and decision-makers to consider how policies can improve the lives of women.

Women in leadership – key statistics

<p>Women make up 56.6% of the Senate in the 47th Parliament</p> <p>Up from 52.6% since the 2022 Federal Election</p>	<p>Women make up 38.4% of the House of Representatives in the 47th Parliament</p> <p>Up from 31.3% since the 2022 Federal Election</p>
<p>10 out of 23 Cabinet positions are held by women</p>	<p>Women hold 51.4% of Australian Government board positions</p>
<p>Women make up 35.1% of ASX200 directors, but only 14 out of 200 CEOs are women</p>	<p>39% of managers across the Australian labour force are women</p>

¹ R Cassells and A Duncan, *Gender Equity Insights 2020: Delivering the Business Outcomes, WGEA and BCEC*, 2020, p 8.

Women in leadership

Increasing women's representation in visible, influential, and decision-making positions is an important driver of gender equality. It also ensures that women are at the decision-making table, and that our deliberative bodies and leaders reflect the diversity of Australia.

Women in visible leadership positions can encourage other women to see themselves as potential leaders or to be attracted to workplaces and industries led by women. Women's visible leadership also helps reinforce – for both men and women – that women are capable leaders, with important leadership qualities. There is also evidence that women's leadership and equal representation on corporate boards drives better performance, innovation and risk management. When women are in visible leadership positions and participate in decision-making, economies and whole societies benefit.

Representation in the Australian Public Service

The Australian Public Service (APS) has demonstrated that targeted gender equality strategies are an effective way to promote more women into senior leadership positions. In 2022, the proportion of women in senior executive roles increased to 52 per cent, from only 26.8 per cent in 2001. Through the *APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26*, the Australian Public Service has focused on practical and impactful actions at the agency level to embed inclusive and respectful workplace practices, ensuring it remains a model employer for gender equality. This includes a deeper analysis of the gender pay gap, and agencies implementing minimum standards and sharing good practice within their portfolios and across the Australian Public Service. Through the full implementation of the recommendations of the Respect@Work Report, Commonwealth public sector organisations will also be required to report to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) on its gender equality indicators.

Representation on the High Court of Australia

On 17 October 2022, the Honourable Justice Jayne Jagot commenced as a Justice of the High Court of Australia. Justice Jagot is the 56th Justice of the High Court and the seventh woman appointed to the Court. This is the first time since Federation that a majority of Justices on the High Court are women. Justice Jagot joins Chief Justice Susan Kiefel AC, Justice Michelle Gordon AC, and Justice Jacqueline Gleeson on the bench.

Representation on boards

The Government is committed to maintaining gender balance on Australian Government boards. Today, just over 51 per cent of those positions are held by women – the highest proportion since gender balance reporting began in 2009. However, there is still more work needed to reach 50 per cent women at the portfolio level with a number of portfolios not yet reaching the target. Women are also less well-represented at Chair and Deputy Chair levels, representing 41 per cent of these positions.

Only 34.3 per cent of ASX300 board positions are held by women, and less than 10 per cent of ASX300 CEOs are women. Additionally, there are 6 all-male boards and 40 boards with only one woman member in the ASX300. The pipeline of women into leadership roles has slowed and almost two-thirds of ASX300 companies, and half of ASX100 companies, have no women in line roles – positions from which CEOs are usually appointed.

The Chief Executive Women Census 2022 highlights that 51 per cent of ASX100 companies, and 36 per cent of ASX300 companies, set 40:40 or better targets (a target of at least 40 per cent of each gender). These targets have not yet resulted in increased representation of women in leadership roles, and further work across all sectors is required to meet them.

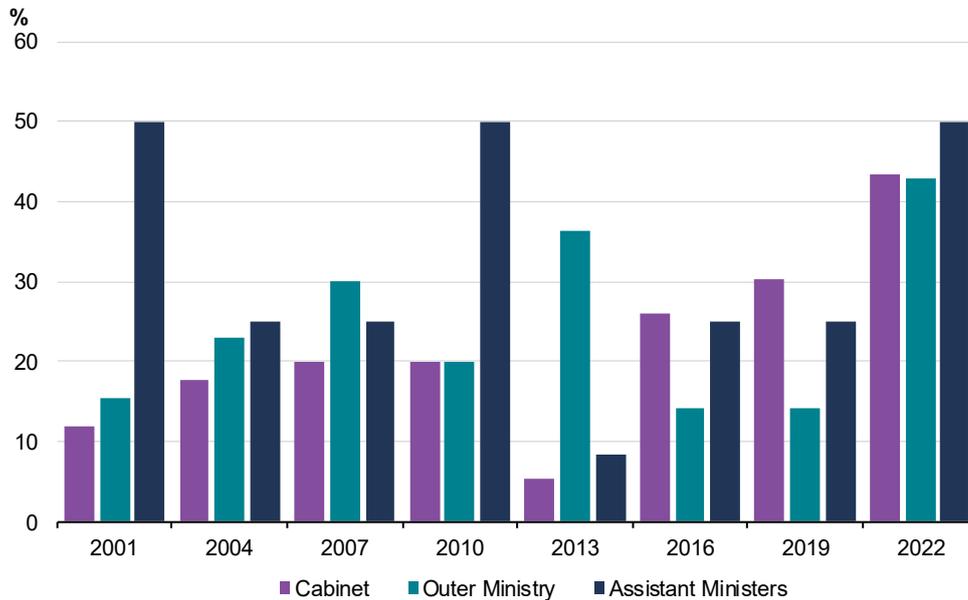
Representation in Australian parliaments

The composition of the Parliament of Australia (Parliament) is changing. 79 years ago, Dame Enid Lyons and Dame Dorothy Tangney entered Parliament side-by-side and took their place as the first women elected to the House of Representatives and Senate. Dame Lyons described it as ‘an occasion which, for every woman in the Commonwealth, marks in some degree a turning point in history’. Parliament has continued to host a diversity of elected representatives, particularly with respect to gender. The changing face of Parliament has resulted in a changing agenda reflecting the diverse concerns and aspirations of all Australians. It makes Australia’s Parliament better and Australia’s democracy stronger. It speaks not only to Australia’s growth and prosperity, but also to the values and meaning of the nation.

Following the Federal Election held on 21 May 2022 (the Election), the proportion of women in Parliament increased to 44.5 per cent: 38.4 per cent in the House of Representatives and 56.6 per cent in the Senate (compared to 38.5 per cent, 31.3 per cent, and 52.6 per cent respectively prior to the Election).

Australia now has a majority of women in the Commonwealth Government (54 of the 103 Government Members and Senators) for the first time in Commonwealth history. The Government has 10 women in its 23-member Cabinet (a record 43.5 per cent) (Chart 1). The Government will continue to work towards its stated goal of a 50/50 balanced Cabinet. Following the Election, the proportion of women in the ministry increased from 30 per cent (9 of 30 members) to 43.3 per cent (13 of 30 members).

Chart 1: Proportion of women in Federal Cabinet, Outer Ministry, and Assistant Minister roles after each election 2001–2022



Source: Parliamentary Library, *Women in the ministry and shadow ministry*, 24 June 2022.

In the past, women have also tended to be appointed to ministerial portfolios that reflect where industry and occupational segregation is most concentrated and that are highly feminised (e.g. social services, education and health), in contrast to economic portfolios, as well as to less senior positions.

Following the Election, an estimated 4.8 per cent of the 47th Parliament (11 of 227 Members of Parliament) identify as First Nations. This is up from 3.2 per cent (7 of 227 Members of Parliament) in the previous Federal Parliament. There is now an historic 9 First Nations women parliamentarians and the Parliament of Australia now has more First Nations parliamentarians than the proportion of the total First Nations population (4.8 per cent, compared to 3.2 per cent of the total population).

As of 1 January 2022, 39 per cent of state and territory parliamentarians were women, an increase from 22 per cent in 2001. In 2016, the Australian Capital Territory’s unicameral Legislative Assembly became the first Australian parliament with a woman majority. In 2018, Tasmania’s parliament followed suit, becoming the first state parliament with a majority of women in the lower house, as well as the first state parliament to achieve gender-equal representation across both houses.

Attitudes affecting gender equality

Perceptions and stereotypes can have a significant impact on gender equality and limit opportunities for women and men. In Australia, 22 per cent of people believe that 'gender inequality doesn't really exist'.² One in 7 Australians (14 per cent) think men are more capable in politics and in the workplace and 16 per cent of Australians think that men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household. These attitudes demonstrate that there remain entrenched attitudes towards gender norms.

Beliefs and behaviour relating to gender drive violence against women. This includes beliefs such as condoning violence against women, men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence, and stereotypes about masculinity and femininity. One in 3 think it is natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends, while one in 3 young men believe that caring for children is best done by women. Higher levels of violence against women are consistently associated with lower levels of gender equality in both public life and personal relationships.

Most young Australians aged 16 to 24 demonstrate an understanding that violence against women can involve non-physical forms of violence and coercion. They support gender equality, reject attitudes supportive of violence against women, and say they would act or like to act if they witnessed abuse or disrespect of women. However, some still harbour concerning attitudes. Nearly a quarter of young people disagree that violence against women is common and one in 7 believe that women often make false allegations of sexual assault. Young men have a lower level of understanding of violence against women than young women. The strongest predictors of attitudes supportive of violence against women are people having a low level of support for gender equality and a low level of understanding of the behaviours constituting violence against women.

The Government is developing an Early Years Strategy to create a whole-of-government approach to children's early years. It will set out the Government's vision for the future of Australia's children and their families. The Office for Youth in the Department of Education is being established to develop and implement a new youth engagement model to embed young people in policy and design processes. And the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* commits to making sure that all children in Australia can access age-appropriate consent and respectful relationships education. Each of these initiatives will be attentive to how gender norms and stereotypes are formed in children and young people across Australia with a view to improving gender equality.

² Ipsos, *International Women's Day 2022*, Global Institute for Women's Leadership, 2022.

A national agenda to drive change

The Government is putting in place the foundations necessary to achieve gender equality in Australia. In addition to the initiatives outlined in this statement, the Government is working collaboratively with the states and territories. The Government has established a Ministerial Council on Women and Women's Safety, reporting directly to National Cabinet on its priorities. Heads of Offices for Women across jurisdictions meet regularly to pursue gender equality policy work.

Gender responsive budgeting

The Government has committed to implement gender responsive budgeting, also known as gender budgeting, which is an established practice across a number of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Gender impact assessment is a key tool used to undertake gender responsive budgeting. It improves decision making by embedding a focus on gender equality in policy development. It involves tracking and reporting gender equality outcomes through budget processes so that policy-makers and decision-makers – including Ministers and the Cabinet – have access to information and analysis that assesses how a policy proposal may impact women and men differently. Gender responsive budgeting and gender impact assessment are practical ways of embedding gender equality into the design of policy and government decision-making.

As a first step, the Office for Women in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has been leading a pilot to conduct gender impact assessments on select policy proposals during this Budget process (see Box 1 for an overview). The insights from this pilot will inform next steps and the evolution of the approach over future Budgets, and consideration of the most appropriate model for the Australian context.

Box 1: Overview of Office for Women gender impact assessment pilot

As part of the gender impact assessment pilot, analysis was conducted by the Office for Women on select issues including the care economy, housing, and jobs and skills. This process involved partnering with lead policy agencies to conduct analysis to understand the impact of policy proposals on women. In this pilot phase, the Office for Women has been the key driver of this analysis, though as this practice is embedded, gender impact analysis will be driven across the Australian Public Service. The following provides a summary of this initial pilot work.

continued on next page

Box 1: Overview of Office for Women gender impact assessment pilot (continued)

Aged Care Work Value Case

The Office for Women supported the development of the Government's submission on the Aged Care Work Value Case to the Fair Work Commission through its consideration of the gender aspects of work value and the broader gender impacts of the case. The submission supported a wage increase for aged care workers and committed to ensuring that the outcome of the Aged Care Work Value Case is funded.

The Government submitted that a range of skills and other factors relating to the work value of aged care workers have not previously been recognised when setting the modern award minimum wages for the overwhelmingly women employees in the aged care sector. The Government further submitted that the undervaluation of caring work in the aged care sector has, in part, been driven by gender-based assumptions about the value of that work, and this has contributed to the work value of aged care workers being significantly higher than the modern awards currently reflect.

Improving access to safe and secure housing

The Office for Women supported the development of the Government's housing commitments to ensure the experiences and needs of women from a diversity of backgrounds and economic circumstances are considered throughout consultation, design, and implementation. This included advice about the benefits of safe and secure housing, including as an enabler of improved education and retirement outcomes, workforce participation, economic equality, safety, health and wellbeing. Key analysis that informed this policy identified that rising costs of living, a competitive housing market, low rental vacancy rates, and long wait lists for crisis accommodation and social and affordable housing were putting safe and secure housing out of reach for many Australians, particularly women.

Analysis also showed that First Nations women, women with disability and older women on low incomes, face greater barriers and are at increased risk of housing insecurity, and housing is central to ending gender-based violence, as family and domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children and insecure housing is a barrier to recovery.

continued on next page

Box 1: Overview of Office for Women gender impact assessment pilot (continued)**Jobs and Skills**

The Office for Women worked in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to support the development of the Jobs and Skills proposals in the October 2022–23 Budget, ensuring that these programs contribute to reducing gender segregation across industries.

Women are well-represented across the vocational education and training (VET) system, however VET course participation in Australia is highly gendered and continues to be influenced by norms of what is traditionally considered women's and men's work.

Trade apprenticeships are less commonly undertaken by women than men, with women making up only 8.2 per cent of current "traditional" trade apprenticeships (trade apprenticeships excluding hairdressers, animal attendants and trainers, and veterinary nurses). For example, the construction industry has historically had a low level of participation by women, and only 4.9 per cent of apprentices in-training in construction are women, which is significantly below the 29.5 per cent of apprentices across all industries who are women.

Women are most likely to undertake nationally recognised courses and qualifications in the occupation area of Community and Personal Services. In 2021, 22.8 per cent of women enrolled in a nationally recognised course or qualification were in the category Community and Personal Service Workers, including 8.5 per cent that were in the sub-category of Child Carers. For men, the largest percentage of enrolments (23.4 per cent) in nationally recognised courses and qualifications were in the occupation area of Technicians and Trades Workers.

The Australian Skills Guarantee will include targets for women and support the employment of women on major, Commonwealth-funded government projects, increasing the opportunities for women to access training.

Jobs and Skills Australia will undertake cohort-specific analysis of priority cohorts, including women. This will enable Government and tripartite partners policy responses to better target interventions, remove barriers and improve accessibility. The range of data and analysis could include highlighting the issues affecting women in the skills sector, and possible opportunities to improve gender equity in non-traditional roles, trades and sectors, and in the workforce, such as the gendered impact of primary child caring responsibilities on women's capacity to participate in paid work.

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Box 1: Overview of Office for Women gender impact assessment pilot (continued)

Affordable and accessible child care

The Office for Women worked closely with the Department of Education to undertake gender analysis on the cheaper child care 2022–23 October Budget proposal. This work highlighted the importance of access to more affordable early childhood education and care in removing a significant barrier for women's workforce participation by providing greater flexibility for families to better balance work and care responsibilities. Office for Women and Treasury continue to work together on opportunities to build robust data that identifies gendered impacts and supports evidenced-informed child care policy.

National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality

The Government is developing a National Strategy to guide whole-of-government actions to achieve the goal of Australia being a global leader in gender equality. The National Strategy will demonstrate how the Government will prioritise gender equality. It will complement other efforts to support gender equality, including the National Plan, implementation of recommendations from the Respect@Work report, and the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030*.

The National Strategy will set out concrete actions that focus on: women's economic equality and independence; leadership, representation and rights; balancing family and care responsibilities; and health and wellbeing. Focusing on these areas recognises the inequalities currently experienced by women in Australia.

Women's economic equality

Women's economic equality is a major priority for the Government. The Government has established the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce, which met for the first time on 21 September 2022. It is a key advisory group that will prioritise issues related to driving women's equality as an economic imperative. It will provide independent advice to Government on a range of issues, including opportunities to close the gender pay gap, address workforce gender segregation, and improve gender equality. It is chaired by Sam Mostyn AO and comprises 13 eminent women from across Australia with a range of lived experiences and expertise.

Analysis by the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce will be complemented by a number of other significant research exercises, which will all apply a gender lens to their work. These include: the Employment White Paper, which will provide a roadmap for Australia to build a bigger, better trained and more productive workforce; the Migration Strategy, which will consider how Australia's migration policy settings could be better aligned with the national interest; and workforce planning studies completed by Jobs and Skills Australia. The Council on Federal Financial Relations, which includes the Commonwealth Treasurer as Chair and all state and territory treasurers, has also agreed that women's economic participation and economic security will be a priority area of work.

Gender-disaggregated data

The Government is committed to building capability in gender analysis across the Australian Public Service, including improvements in the collection and use of high-quality and accessible intersectional gender-disaggregated data.

An outcome of the Jobs and Skills Summit was immediate action in relation to data, including delivering on the recommendations of the *Review of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (2021) to expand data collection on key gender equality indicators. These actions included requiring businesses with 500 or more employees to commit to and report to WGEA on measurable targets to improve gender equality in their workplaces. WGEA will also publish the organisational gender pay gaps of businesses with 100 or more employees.

WGEA will also commence voluntary collection of diversity data, including on First Nations background, cultural and linguistic diversity and people with disability, in order to more accurately measure the gender pay gap over time. From 2023, Australian Government public sector entities will be required to report against 6 gender equality indicators to WGEA. This will implement recommendation 43(a) of the Respect@Work Report for the Australian Government public sector.

The Gender Data Steering Group has been convened by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Bureau of Statistics in response to the Review of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*. The role of the Gender Data Steering Group is to maximise the impact of the Government's major data holdings as an evidence base for gender equality policy. This evidence base will contribute to gender impact assessments and the National Strategy. The Gender Data Steering Group will also investigate options for streamlining organisations' reporting of workplace gender data.

Partnering to advance equality for First Nations women

First Nations women are vital to the strength and wellbeing of First Nations families and communities. The Government recognises that First Nations women are leaders in their families and communities, remaining at the forefront of social change, establishing and running holistic organisations grounded in culture and community. They have always been central to providing care and continue to work diligently to keep family, kin and country safe.

Investing in First Nations women and girls using a foundation of place-based, culturally safe, healing-oriented and trauma-informed policies will see more women and girls have improved life choices and outcomes, engage in leadership roles and become role models in their communities. Additionally, reforms that benefit First Nations women and girls will achieve positive changes for the entire community. This is reflected in the landmark *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report*, which was delivered to the Government in 2020 by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Ms June Oscar AO.

The report is the First National report in 34 years where First Nations women and girls have been heard as a collective on the issues that matter to them, and where their diverse and lived experiences have been elevated. The voices and aspirations of First Nations women and girls will inform future policy direction for all portfolios, at all levels of government. The Government response to the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Report* is intended to generate longevity of the actions to be undertaken across the Commonwealth.

Commissioner Oscar will convene a First Nations Women and Girls National Leadership Summit in 2023. The Leadership Summit will empower women's leadership at the local level and provide a national platform for healing intergenerational trauma and action to eradicate racism and ending family violence. This work will complement the Government's commitment to implementing a dedicated First Nations National Plan to end violence against First Nations women and children, and more broadly, the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* in full and to ensure First Nations voices are heard.

Global leadership

The Government is committed to Australia re-emerging as a global leader in gender equality. This recognises gender equality as a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world and that women's empowerment should be at the centre of all policy decisions at home, in our region and around the globe. Australia will take a multifaceted approach to promoting gender equality, showing our commitment through international advocacy and support to our near region.

The Government will maintain its commitment to gender equality as a core foreign policy priority through:

- measurable and accountable targets in the aid program
- advocating for women and girls through strategic contributions in all multilateral forums, including the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women, the UN Human Rights Council, and the UN General Assembly
- being a leading donor to UN Women.

The Government's advocacy in these forums will be world leading and highlight Australian domestic efforts to demonstrate and lead by example in tackling this global challenge.

Australia is one of the few countries with a dedicated Ambassador for Women and Girls to prosecute this advocacy, a demonstration of Australia's commitment to gender equality for all women and girls. Australia similarly has an elected representative on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, building on our strong history as a global advocate in this regard. Advocacy for women's economic security through the G20, World Trade Organisation, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) will also be a critical pillar of Australia's presence on the global stage. This will include taking on the Chair of the APEC Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy in 2023.

Climate change and gender

The Government is taking action to ensure Australia's climate adaptation efforts are socially inclusive and gender responsive, in line with Article 7.5 of the *Paris Agreement*. In this Budget, the Government is committing to the co-design and scoping of methodology for a National Climate Risk Assessment. National climate risk assessments are part of the national adaptation planning process outlined in the *Paris Agreement*. A regular and robust assessment will provide a national picture of our climate risk to inform national adaptation priority setting and responses. The scoping process will set an approach to examine socioeconomic factors such as gender when assessing the capacity of different groups and sectors of the economy to adapt to climate change. The National Climate Risk Assessment will also provide an evidence base for the Government to monitor and evaluate adaptation progress and ensure actions and investments are informed by an assessment of the risks of climate change.

Achieving economic equality for women

Economic equality between women and men is essential to achieving gender equality. Addressing economic inequality requires removing barriers that limit women's opportunities and addressing the drivers of the gender pay gap, including discrimination and violence against women. This involves ensuring women have equal choice and access in relation to education, labour force participation, career progression and financial independence. Tackling these factors will provide a range of economic and social benefits and address the impact of economic inequality on women's lifetime earnings and economic security. This chapter leads with an examination of a range of issues, including the drivers of the gender pay gap, and follows with the Government's key commitments to improve economic equality.

The Government is committed to advancing women's economic equality, including leading a national push to help close the gender pay gap. Australian women are highly educated, but this does not always translate to economic opportunities. Workers in female-dominated industries tend to be lower paid than in male-dominated industries, and women are over-represented in both casual employment and in award-reliant industries. Delivering greater opportunities for women to switch jobs, seek promotion and access a wider range of career pathways will increase economic dynamism, which is associated with higher wage growth and increased productivity.

There are a range of challenges to achieving economic equality. Women in Australia continue to have lower workforce participation rates and work fewer hours than men. This time out of the workforce, along with the unequal division of unpaid care and work, discrimination and bias, and lower pay in female-dominated industries, produces a significant gender pay gap, which exists across all industries. This culminates with women being likely to earn less over their lifetimes and retire with less than men.

Additionally, First Nations women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities, women living in regional, rural and remote locations, older women, LGBTIQ+ people and women with caring responsibilities can face multiple and compounding disadvantages when participating in the workforce.

The factors that impact women's economic equality are interrelated and often compounding. This chapter will explore the systemic issues and structural barriers that lead to women doing more unpaid and low paid work, not receiving equal pay for equal work, and performing more part-time and casual work. Addressing these factors requires policy responses across a range of areas. Measuring and addressing these factors not only supports efforts to advance gender equality but will also provide economic benefits through higher wage growth and increased productivity.

Women's economic equality – key statistics

<p>Labour force participation rate</p> <p>Women: 62.3% Men: 71.0%</p>	<p>Gender pay gap</p> <p>14.1% or \$263.90 per week</p>
<p>Average daily unpaid hours worked</p> <p>Women: 4 hours 31 minutes Men: 3 hours 12 minutes</p>	<p>Underemployment ratio</p> <p>Women: 7.4% Men: 5.2%</p>
<p>Attainment of a bachelor degree or above (population aged 15 to 74)</p> <p>Women: 34.2% Men: 28.3%</p>	<p>Median super balances at retirement (population aged 65 years old)</p> <p>Women: \$167,000 Men: \$189,000</p>

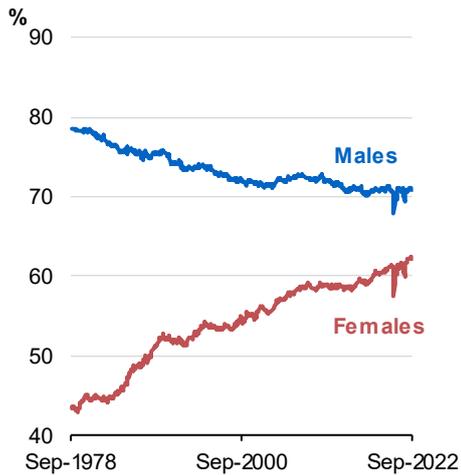
Lower workforce participation

Labour force participation is central to supporting future economic growth. While participation is high and the outlook is for unemployment to remain relatively low, key barriers to women's participation in the workforce persist and many women report wanting to work more hours. Reducing these barriers will ensure women have equal opportunities to participate in the workforce, so that the full potential of women in Australia can be realised.

In September 2022, the labour force participation gap between women and men was 8.7 percentage points (62.3 per cent for women and 71.0 per cent for men) (Chart 2). While the gap is narrowing, there remain key differences in the ways women and men participate in the labour force that further contribute to different economic outcomes. Women work fewer hours than men, with the share of women in part-time employment more than 2 times that of men (Chart 3). Compared to employed men, employed women are also 1.7 times more likely to be both part-time *and* casual, and the rate of casualisation for women remains 4.1 percentage points higher than that for men. Further, around 60 per cent

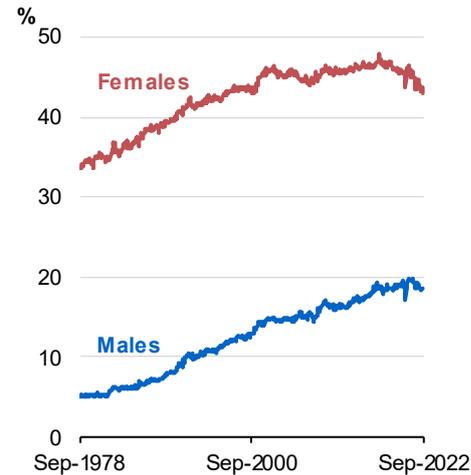
of workers on fixed-term contracts are women. In comparison to other OECD economies, Australia has one of the highest rates of women in part-time employment.

Chart 2: Participation rate by sex



Source: ABS, *Labour Force*, September 2022.

Chart 3: Part-time employment share by sex



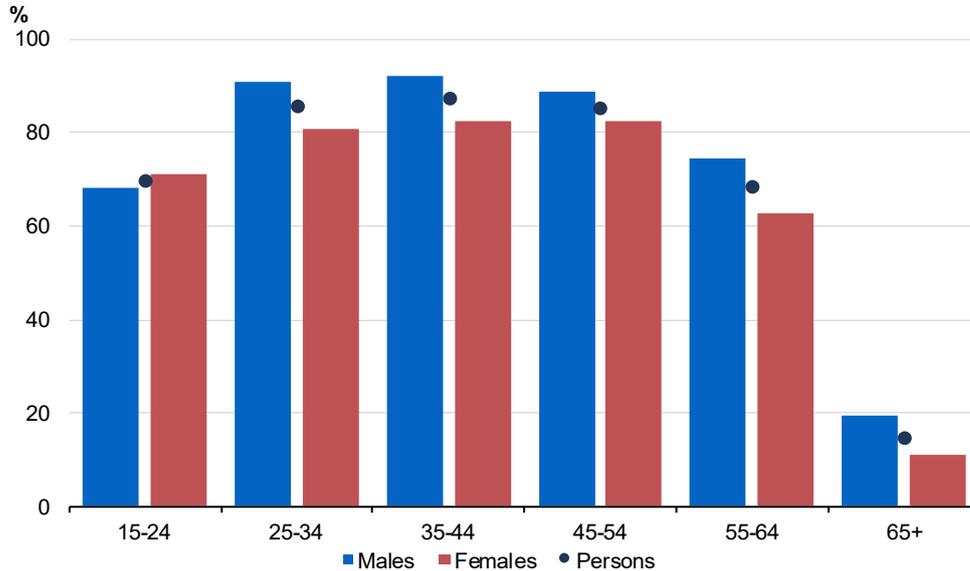
Source: ABS, *Labour Force*, September 2022.

In addition to working fewer hours on average, the women's underemployment ratio has been consistently higher than men's over the past 2 decades. In September 2022, 7.4 per cent of employed women wanted and were available to work more hours, compared to 5.2 per cent of men.

These differences in participation in paid work exist at all levels of education. Lower participation and fewer hours worked are a key contributor to the gender gap in earnings and lower levels of economic security for women.

The participation rate for women drops sharply from age 55 (Chart 4), with women aged 55 to 64 less engaged in the labour market than men of an equivalent age (62.9 per cent compared to 74.5 per cent). Although women aged 55 to 64 have a lower unemployment rate than men (2.4 per cent compared to 2.8 per cent as of August 2022), unemployment measures do not include people who are not in the labour force – for example, because they have given up on an active job search.

Chart 4: Participation rate by age cohort and sex



Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Detailed*, August 2022.

First Nations women have lower participation rates than the national average. In the 2021 ABS Census, First Nations women aged 15 years and over had a participation rate of 52.2 per cent, which was lower than the participation rate for First Nations men (56.2 per cent) and non-Indigenous women (60.7 per cent).

In addition, participation rates for women with a reported disability are lower than for those without a reported disability. In the 2018 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, the participation rate of women aged 15 to 64 years with a reported disability was 50.8 per cent, compared to 79.7 per cent for women without a reported disability. People with disability can face specific challenges to engaging in the labour force. Most (93 per cent) working-age people with disability who are unemployed report at least one difficulty finding work (compared with 83 per cent without disability).

Participation in employment and financial independence can also be affected by experiencing discrimination. This can include people with disability being directly denied employment or having employers fail to provide reasonable adjustments in the workplace to enable them to work safely and productively, such as providing safe access to the workplace or assistive technology.

A persistent gender pay gap

The way in which men and women participate in the workforce also influences earnings gaps. The national gender pay gap in Australia is currently 14.1 per cent. This means on average, a woman working full-time earns \$263.90 less per week than a man working full-time. Over the past 2 decades the gender pay gap has persisted, decreasing by only 1.2 percentage points since May 2002.

There are various ways to calculate the difference between what women and men earn and all indicate a significant and persistent gap. The national gender pay gap uses ABS data to compare women's average weekly ordinary full-time earnings across all industries and occupations to men's. Full-time workers, however, are only part of the workforce. When the gap is analysed based on both full-time and part-time workers, and including overtime payments, the gap is much larger at 29.7 per cent.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency also calculates the gender pay gap comparing women's total annual remuneration to men's for employers with 100 or more employees. When taking into account full-time equivalent earnings of part-time and full-time workers, plus any additional benefits such as superannuation, bonuses and overtime, the pay gap is 22.8 per cent.

The extent of the pay gap for women from diverse backgrounds is unknown. From 2023, WGEA will commence collection of data to enable more accurate measurement of the pay gap that exists for First Nations women, culturally diverse women, and women living with disability in Australian workplaces.

While Australian women have high levels of educational attainment, the gender pay gap can start when women first enter the workforce. In May 2021, half of all young women aged 25 to 34 years held a bachelor degree or above, compared with 36.6 per cent of young men. In 2020, there were slightly more women than men entering overall employment after undergraduate study. However, WGEA analysis of median undergraduate starting salaries among men and women who engaged in the same field of study indicates a graduate gender pay gap, with men reporting higher starting salaries than women in 15 out of 19 fields of study in 2020.³ This includes science and mathematics graduates, for whom the full-time starting salary is \$61,500 for women and \$65,000 for men.

The gender pay gap is driven by a range of factors. According to the *She's Price(d)less 2022 Report* by KPMG, the Diversity Council of Australia and WGEA, the key drivers are: gender discrimination and bias; type of job and industry sector of employment; caring for family and workforce participation.⁴

³ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), *Higher education enrolments and graduate labour market statistics*, 2021.

⁴ KPMG, Diversity Council Australia and WGEA, *She's Price(d)less: The Economics of the Gender Pay Gap*, 2022.

Gender discrimination and bias

Gender discrimination and bias can be conscious or unconscious, overt or covert, and can have lasting effects on women's economic equality and their potential lifetime earnings. It can take a range of forms, including workplace harassment and the different treatment of women and men in the workplace. This includes the different treatment of women in recruitment and promotion practices, the allocation of work tasks and access to learning and development opportunities.

While the *Fair Work Act 2009* makes it unlawful to discriminate based on sex, bias can still play a role in employment outcomes for women. Studies have found that women and men are held to different standards in recruitment processes, with women more likely to face tougher evaluation standards, or have their achievements and qualifications more closely scrutinised. International research indicates that women are also more likely to be penalised for attempting to negotiate for higher pay.⁵

Internationally, increasing pay transparency is considered important to help address the gender pay gap. Prohibiting pay secrecy can empower employees to advocate for better remuneration and employment conditions for themselves and may encourage businesses to be more transparent and fair with their employees from the outset.

Unequal gender distribution across jobs and industry sectors

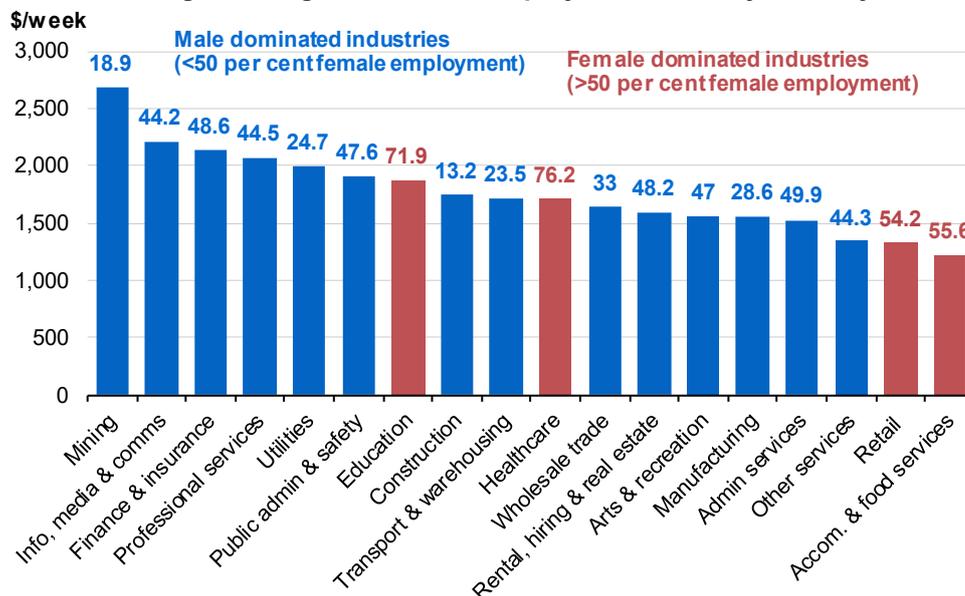
Occupational and industrial segregation refers to the unequal distribution of women and men in certain jobs or industries and is a key driver of the gender pay gap. An example of *industrial segregation* is the high proportion of women in Health Care (around 76 per cent) and Education and Training (around 72 per cent), relative to the low proportion of women in Construction (around 13 per cent) and Mining (around 19 per cent). This is different to *occupational segregation*, which involves the under-representation of women in high paying roles, such as management and chief executives, and over-representation in low paying roles, such as administration or care work.

Industrial segregation

The Australian labour market is highly gender-segregated by industry and by occupation. The *She's Price(d) Less* report found the role of industrial segregation as a driver of the gender pay gap increased from 9 per cent in 2017 to 20 per cent in 2020. Data indicate that average earnings are generally lower in female-dominated industries (industries in which women represent over 50 per cent of the workforce). As shown in Chart 5, the 6 highest industries by average weekly ordinary time earnings are male-dominated, with the most highly paid industry (mining) being around 81 per cent male. In contrast, the 2 industries with the lowest average weekly ordinary time earnings (accommodation and food services, and retail) have 56 per cent and 54 per cent female share of employment respectively.

⁵ WGEA, *Gender equitable recruitment and promotion*, 2019.

Chart 5: Average earnings and female employment share by industry



Source: Treasury analysis of ABS, *Labour Force, Detailed*, August 2022; and ABS, *Average Weekly Earnings*, May 2022.

Note: Earnings are full-time average weekly ordinary time earnings for adults. Data labels indicate the female percentage of employment in each industry, with red shading indicating industries with more than 50 per cent female employment. Data are original and an average is taken of observations in the year to May 2022 to account for seasonality and general volatility in industry data.

The way in which pay is negotiated and set can influence gender pay equity across industries and organisations. Women are more likely to be paid through an award wage. Of the 2.7 million award-reliant employees, 1.6 million (or 59.1 per cent) are women, which represents 26.9 per cent of all women employees (compared to 19.0 per cent of men). This is largely due to the over-representation of women in industries with high award coverage. Healthcare accounts for 22.1 per cent of all employees on awards, while hospitality and retail trade account for 19.5 per cent and 12.5 per cent respectively.

Occupational segregation

On average, women working full-time earn less than men working full-time in every industry, even in those that are female-dominated. Women make up 75.5 per cent of the Health Care and Social Assistance workforce, which has an industry gender pay gap of 22.2 per cent. In male-dominated industries, such as Construction, women can expect to earn 18.8 per cent less than men.

Men are over-represented in leadership roles across all industries, including female-dominated industries. WGEA analysis of 2018 data indicated that despite making up 79.0 per cent of the Health Care and Social Assistance industry and 73.2 per cent of the Education and Training industry, women held fewer CEO and Key Management Personnel (KMP) roles than men. In these female-dominated industries, women held only 37.6 per cent of CEO and 48.2 per cent of KMP roles. Women's representation in senior leadership roles was even lower in male-dominated industries, with 6.3 per cent of CEO and 20.7 per cent of KMP roles held by women.⁶ ABS data on the manager occupation level found that men make up 60.7 per cent of all managers in August 2022. WGEA and Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre analysis found that achieving a gender balance of 40:40:20 in all industries and occupations would reduce Australia's gender pay gap by a third.⁷

The Australian Public Service provides an example of how occupational segregation can contribute to a gender pay gap. In 2021, the APS gender pay gap was 6.0 per cent. The average base (full-time equivalent annualised) salary for men was \$102,112 while the average base salary for women was \$96,006. This represents a downward trend since 2017, when it the APS gender pay gap was 8.4 per cent. The gender pay gap across the APS may be primarily due to differences in the representation of men and women within each classification level. The data show that women have historically been under-represented at higher classification levels (Executive Level 2 and above) and over-represented at lower classification levels (APS 2 to 6). Australian Public Service Commission data show there has been a consistent proportional increase of women at higher classification levels since 2017.⁸

⁶ WGEA, *Gender segregation in Australia's workforce*, 2019.

⁷ A Duncan, A Mavisakalyan and S Salazar, *Gender Equity Insights 2022: the State of Inequality in Australia*, WGEA and BCEC, 2022.

⁸ APSC, *Australian Public Service Remuneration Report 2021, 2022*.

Gender differences in economic outcomes for Australian migrants

Gender differences in labour market outcomes are more pronounced among Australia's migrant population. Women migrants tend to have weaker economic outcomes than migrants who are men, with lower labour force participation and lower median incomes across skilled, family and humanitarian visa programs. The gender gap in labour force participation is also higher among migrants when compared with the Australian general population. ABS Census results suggest this is in part because migrant women are more likely than the general population to provide unpaid care.

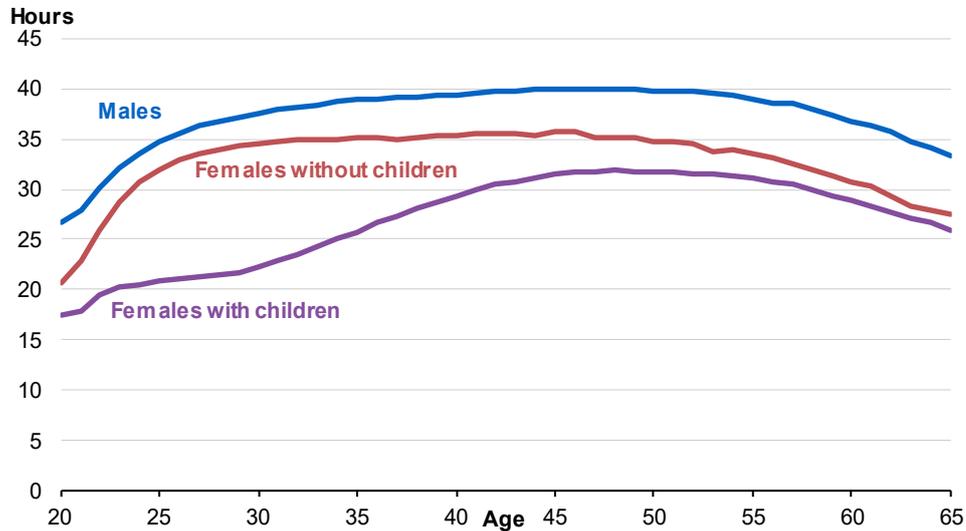
Focusing on skilled migrants, only around 39 per cent of primary skilled visa grants in 2019–20 were to women. Since 2015–16 the top nominated occupation (around 30 per cent) for permanent skilled migrant women was registered nurse. These trends reflect a combination of labour market demand from Australian employers and the historical gender composition of industries, both in Australia and internationally.

Evidence of the 'motherhood penalty'

Following the arrival of children, women typically make significant and long-term adjustments to their paid employment, while men's employment remains largely unchanged. Treasury research finds that women reduce their hours in paid work by around 35 per cent across the first 5 years following the arrival of children.⁹ Men's hours of paid work drop only during the first month of parenthood before returning to previous levels. While the gap in hours worked narrows as women get older, women who have had children still tend to work fewer hours than women without children and men (regardless of parenting status) into their 50s and 60s (Chart 6).

⁹ E Bahar, N Deutscher, N Bradshaw and M Montaigne, 'Children and the Gender Earnings Gap', *Treasury Round Up*, 2022.

Chart 6: Average weekly hours worked by age and sex

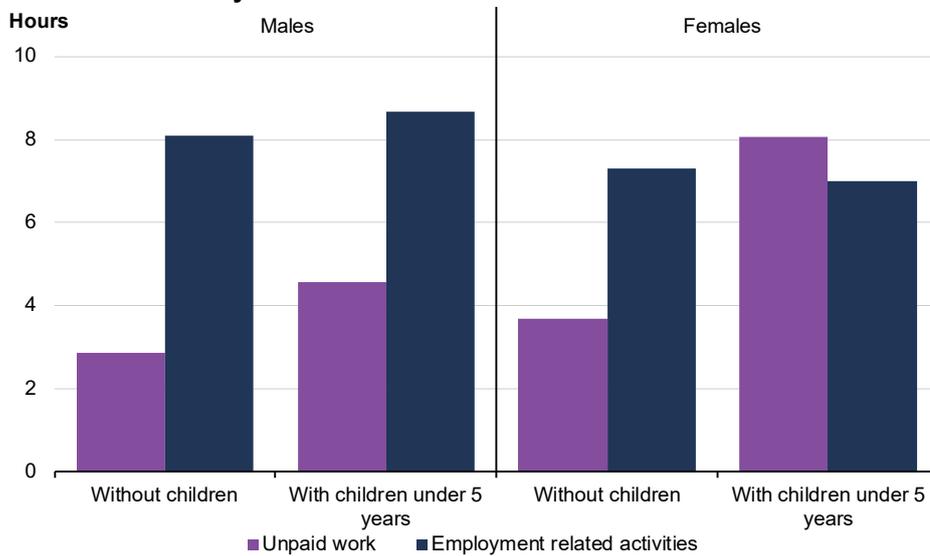


Source: Treasury analysis of ABS, Census, 2021.

Notes: Parenting status based on whether females have given birth to a child.

The unequal division of unpaid work is a key driver of the gender gap in workforce participation. Of those who engaged in unpaid work in 2020–21, women on average performed 4 hours and 31 minutes of unpaid work each day, compared with 3 hours and 12 minutes for men. This difference was mainly driven by women spending more time on unpaid child care and domestic activities. The gap in unpaid work was particularly large for parents of children under 5 years (Chart 7).

Chart 7: Average daily hours of participants in unpaid work and employment related activities by sex



Source: ABS, *How Australians Use Their Time*, 2020–21 financial year.

Fathers and partners may face barriers to taking leave from work to care for children. A Fathers and Partners survey conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2014 found that, despite taking short periods of leave, 27 per cent of fathers and partners reported experiencing discrimination when requesting or taking parental leave, or when they returned to work.¹⁰

Women are also more likely to pick up ad hoc care responsibilities. For example, Treasury estimates that in households with dependent school-aged children, mothers reduce their hours worked by around 10 per cent on average in response to school holidays, whereas father’s hours decline by 6.7 per cent. Treasury analysis also estimates that in response to pandemic-induced school closures, mothers with school-aged children reduced working hours by 1.4 per cent on average relative to their usual hours, while no meaningful change was observed for fathers.

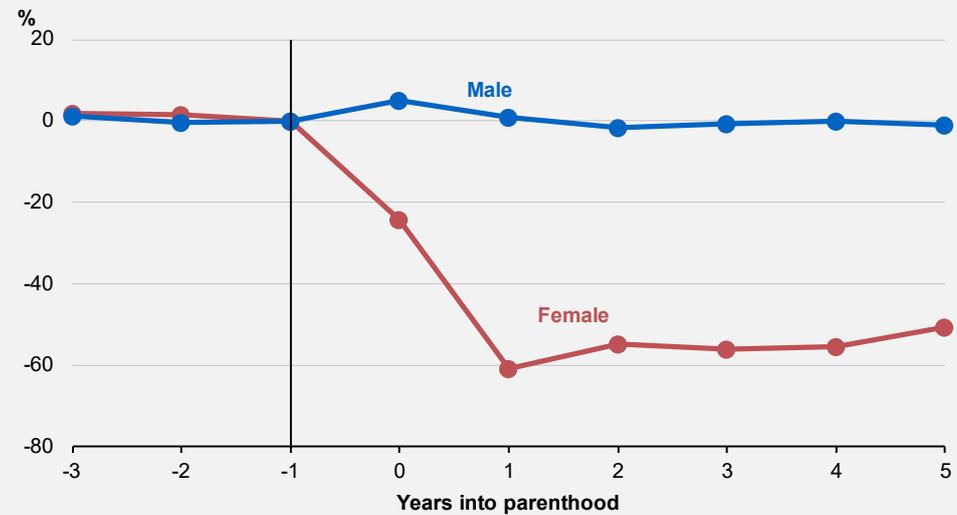
In addition to a reduction in hours worked, women’s time out of the workforce for caring responsibilities has an adverse impact on earnings, often called the ‘motherhood penalty’. Time out of the workforce can result in the perception that women’s skills have depreciated and can mean that women return to lower-status or lower-paid roles. The effects of taking time out of the workforce to care for children can compound and result in women receiving lower pay and fewer career progression opportunities. More in-depth analysis on the ‘motherhood penalty’ is outlined in Box 2 below.

¹⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review – Community Guide*, 2014.

Box 2: Estimates of the ‘motherhood penalty’

Treasury research finds that women’s earnings are reduced by an average of 55 per cent in the first 5 years of parenthood (Chart 8). This ‘motherhood penalty’ remains significant a decade into parenthood. This is primarily because mothers typically reduce their paid work hours or exit the labour force to care for children, while fathers’ work patterns remain unchanged on average. No significant long-term impact on earnings is observed for men after the arrival of children.

Chart 8: Changes in earnings after the arrival of children



Source: Treasury analysis of HILDA Release 19.0.

Notes: Motherhood penalty estimated after running an event study of the form specified in Kleven et al (2019).¹¹

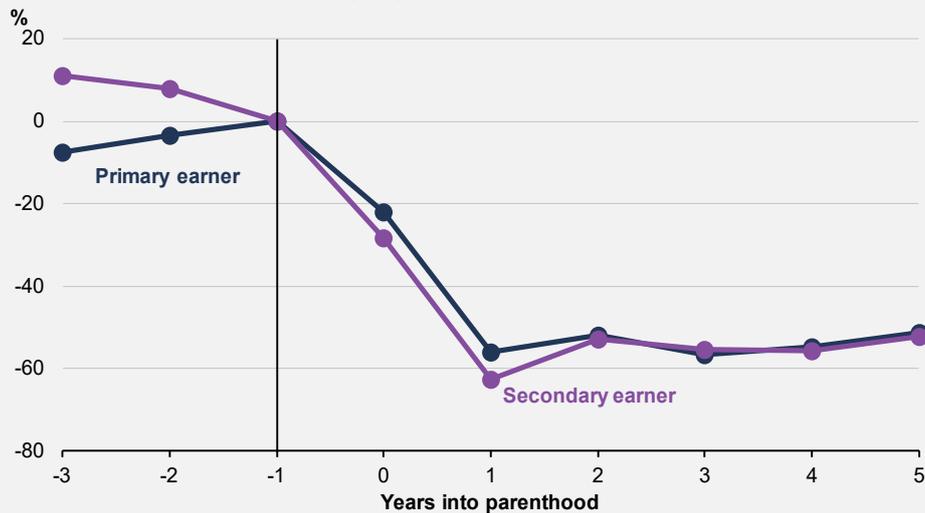
Further, this research indicates the motherhood penalty is similar whether a woman is the primary earner in a household or not. This implies that relative earnings prior to children has little influence over the way households allocate paid work following the arrival of children (Chart 9), and suggests that gendered norms are a strong driver of caring patterns in the household. This research also finds that mothers’ satisfaction with their work opportunities falls compared to fathers, and mothers are more likely than fathers to report that their family life affects work.

continued on next page

11 H Kleven, C Landais and FE Sogaard, ‘Children and gender inequality: Evidence from Denmark’, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2019.

Box 2: Estimates of the 'motherhood penalty' (continued)

Chart 9: Motherhood penalty, by breadwinner status



Source: Treasury analysis of HILDA Release 19.0.

Notes: Motherhood penalty estimated for women based on earner status in household in year before parenthood.

The role of flexible work and the unequal allocation of household labour can help explain the motherhood penalty. Women who had greater access to flexible conditions before having children are more likely to remain employed after having children. However, for women who remain employed, the hourly wage penalty is larger for women in more flexible occupations, likely reflecting foregone promotion opportunities.

Finally, this research also highlights the growing importance of the motherhood penalty in explaining the total gender earnings gap. Over the past 2 decades, the gender earnings gap has fallen, but the motherhood penalty component of the gap has grown.

Single mothers

Single mothers can face particularly acute challenges in relation to workforce participation and financial security that can have significant impacts for their lifetime earnings and retirement incomes.

In June 2022, there were over 650,000 single parents in Australia, representing almost 20 per cent of all families with dependent children. Women accounted for over 80 per cent of single parents. While the proportion of single mothers participating in paid work in Australia has increased over time, it remains below that of single fathers. In single-parent

families with children under 15 years, 65.3 per cent of single mothers were employed in June 2022 compared with 76.4 per cent of single fathers.

Single mothers who experience separation or divorce can also experience considerable drops in household disposable income. When child support payments, which aim to ensure children continue to receive support from their parents following separation, are not paid it can also further diminish a single mother's financial security.

The 2020 HILDA Survey reports that there is a higher rate of financial stress for single-parent families, with the rate of single-parent families experiencing 2 or more indicators of financial stress around twice that of couple-parent families. Data from the HILDA Survey also indicates that the risk of financial hardship for single mothers, in particular, is at least double that of partnered mothers. It further outlines that single parents have considerably higher rates of welfare reliance than other family types.

Single mothers are also more likely than men to receive one of the main income support payments for single parents, Parenting Payment Single (PPS). As at June 2022, 232,000 single parents received PPS, with women making up 95 per cent of total recipients (221,404 compared to 10,595 men). The indexation of government allowances will provide some relief to cost-of-living pressures for those receiving the PPS.

Women's lifetime economic outcomes

Factors such as the gender pay gap, time out of the workforce due to caring responsibilities, and lower participation and hours worked are all forms of women's economic inequality and have lifelong impacts. Over their lifetimes, women are likely to earn less than men, are less likely to advance in their careers as far as men, and tend to accumulate less superannuation than men. On average, women tend to retire earlier than men. The cumulative effect of these factors can have negative impacts later in life, particularly for women who go through a relationship breakdown or divorce.

Research by the Grattan Institute using data from the 2017 HILDA Survey estimated that an average 25 year old woman with children will earn around \$2 million less over her lifetime than an average 25 year old man with children, and nearly \$1 million less than an average woman without children.¹²

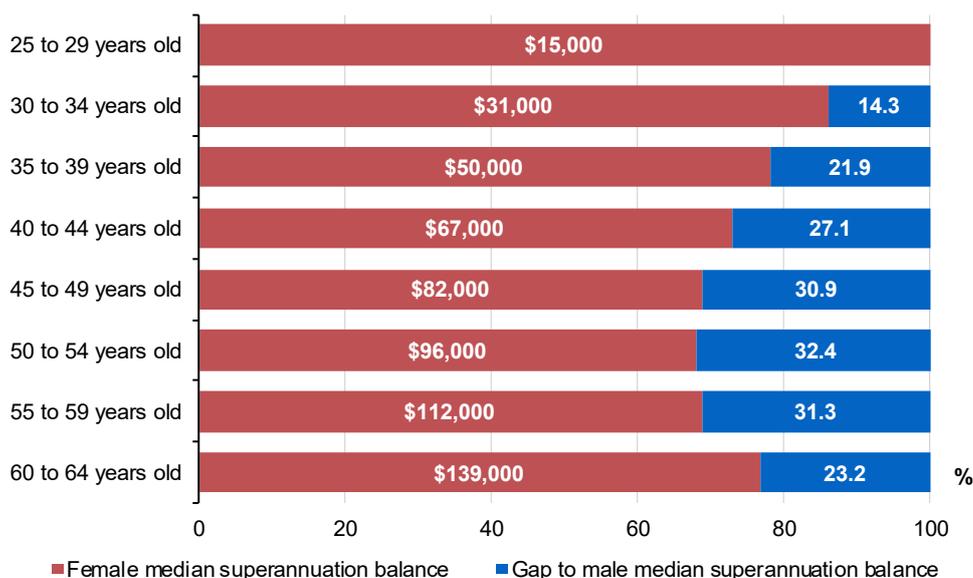
¹² D Wood, K Griffiths and O Emslie, *Cheaper childcare: A practical plan to boost female workforce participation*, Grattan Institute, 2020.

Superannuation and retirement incomes

The impact on lifetime earnings flows through to superannuation balances, with the main driver of the gender superannuation gap being the gap in lifetime earnings. In 2019–20, there were 9.1 million men and 8.5 million women with a superannuation account. The median super balance for men is \$56,000, and women is \$45,000.

The gender superannuation gap narrows at older ages (Chart 10). This is partly due to the role of voluntary contributions, which are largely made by those with higher balances, or those who are partnered to people with higher balances. The 2020 Retirement Income Review found that on average, women aged 55 to 64 make significantly larger voluntary contributions to their superannuation than men. However, single women in this age group are generally less likely to make voluntary contributions (and make lower total contributions on average) than partnered women.

Chart 10: Female median superannuation balance and gap to male median superannuation balance by age cohort, as a percentage of male median superannuation balance



Source: ATO Member Account Attribute Service/Member Account Transaction Service, 2019–20

Note: The median superannuation balance is calculated based on those with superannuation balances.

The *2021 Intergenerational Report* projected that the gender gap in superannuation balances will narrow gradually over time as the superannuation system matures and women benefit from greater workforce participation. By 2061, the gender gap in median superannuation balances at retirement is projected to narrow to \$44,000: \$433,000 for women and \$477,000 for men. This is the result of an increase in women's labour force participation, which means that women spend more years contributing to their superannuation, including through higher voluntary contributions.

The gap in superannuation balances is not necessarily representative of outcomes in retirement. In retirement, the gap between men's and women's incomes narrows due to Age Pension means testing arrangements, which target support to those with lower income and assets. This is an important mechanism for reducing inequality in retirement outcomes.

As the Superannuation Guarantee rate reaches 12 per cent (scheduled for 1 July 2025), superannuation balances will continue to grow. Most working women at the start of their career will have a balance approximately 15 per cent larger at retirement (as a result of the Superannuation Guarantee rate increase to 12 per cent) than if the Superannuation Guarantee rate had stayed at 10 per cent. This result is similar for men. To further strengthen the superannuation system, the Government is committed to including a right to superannuation within the National Employment Standards, which will give workers, including women, the power to pursue their unpaid superannuation as a workplace entitlement.

Government action to reduce barriers to women's workforce participation

Policies that reduce barriers or disincentives to women's workforce participation support women's economic security and the economy, and can help reset how we value paid and unpaid care across our economy.

Cheaper child care

Affordable and accessible early childhood education and care makes it easier for parents and carers to participate in paid work. This is particularly the case for women, who are more likely than men to be the primary carer of children, and more likely to have the cost of child care factored against their earnings. Early childhood education and care plays an important role in preparing children for school by developing their literacy, numeracy and social skills. Key impacts of the Child Care Subsidy changes are outlined in Box 3 below.

Box 3: Impacts of Child Care Subsidy changes

The increases in Child Care Subsidy rates from July 2023 will reduce out-of-pocket fees for around 96 per cent of families who use formal early childhood education and care services, around 1.26 million families, while ensuring no families will be worse off. This is a key economic reform and will reduce barriers to women's workforce participation and support children's development.

A family with a combined annual income of \$120,000 with one child in centre-based day care for 3 days a week – the national average – will be \$1,780 better off in 2023–24.

By making early childhood education and care more affordable, the Government is supporting more parents to balance work and care responsibilities and enabling greater workforce participation. With these reforms, Treasury estimates that women with young children will work up to 1,410,000 more hours per week in 2023–24 – equivalent to an extra 37,000 full-time workers.

The reforms will also support children's development and their preparation for school. In 2021, 40.7 per cent of children in Australia who did not receive some early childhood education and care prior to their first year of full-time schooling were identified as being developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census, compared with 20.3 per cent of those who did receive some early education. The domains include language and cognitive skills; physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; and communications skills and general knowledge.

Budget highlights: investing in early childhood education and care

- The Government is investing \$4.7 billion over 4 years from 2022–23 to implement its Plan for Cheaper Child Care.
- From July 2023, Child Care Subsidy rates will lift for 96 per cent of families using care and none will be worse off. Families will continue to receive the existing higher subsidy rates for their second and subsequent children aged 5 or under in care.
- The Government is also providing families with First Nations children access to a minimum level entitlement of 36 hours per fortnight of subsidised early childhood education and care from July 2023. This will help more First Nations children access early childhood education and support their readiness for school.
- The new Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership will consider policy reforms across early childhood domains and all relevant Closing the Gap targets. Reforms are likely to benefit First Nations women through supporting workforce participation, reducing violence against women and children and the broader benefits of uplifting opportunities for First Nations women by enabling children and families to thrive and meet their potential.
- To further improve the affordability of early childhood education and care in Australia, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) will undertake a 12-month inquiry into the drivers of prices. The inquiry will also examine the impact of the Child Care Subsidy increases on out-of-pocket fees. The ACCC will provide a final report by the end of 2023.
 - The ACCC's inquiry will complement a broader Productivity Commission review into the early childhood education and care sector, which will commence in the first half of 2023 and report in 2024. The review will examine ways to improve affordability and access for families, better support women's workforce participation and support children's development, including considering a universal 90 per cent subsidy rate.
- The early childhood education and care system will be considered as part of the development of the Early Years Strategy, which will create a more integrated and coordinated approach to early childhood development.

The Government recognises the challenges within the early childhood education and care sector, including access issues for families and an ongoing shortage of workers. As agreed at National Cabinet on 31 August 2022, the Australian Government will work with the states and territories on these and other issues as part of the development of a long-term vision to deliver high quality, affordable early childhood education and care.

Expanding Paid Parental Leave

Patterns of unpaid care within households are set soon after childbirth or adoption.¹³ Well-designed parental leave policies can play an important role in encouraging parents to share unpaid care responsibilities. This supports gender equality and productivity by boosting women's workforce participation. International evidence also shows that sharing care responsibilities has positive impacts on children's development and fathers' and partners' health and happiness.

The Government-funded Paid Parental Leave scheme was introduced in 2011 following the 2009 Productivity Commission *Inquiry into Support for Parents with Newborn Children*. The Inquiry reported that such a scheme would deliver a number of benefits, which remain applicable in 2022. These include that paid parental leave:

- promotes important social goals, particularly that taking time out of the workforce to care for a child is 'part of the usual course of work and life for parents in the paid workforce'
- improves the wellbeing of families, in particular child and maternal health, by increasing the time parents take away from work
- supports women to remain connected to the workforce following the birth or adoption of a child
- increases employee retention rates for business.

The current Government-funded Paid Parental Leave scheme comprises 2 payments: Parental Leave Pay for up to 18 weeks to the birth parent; and Dad and Partner Pay for up to 2 weeks to fathers and partners. Both payments are based on the weekly rate of the national minimum wage. Parental Leave Pay includes up to 30 flexible PPL days which supports sharing of the entitlement between parents. The take up of payment under the Government-funded Paid Parental Leave scheme by fathers in Australia is significantly lower than for mothers, being utilised for approximately 30 per cent of births.

Increasingly, private sector employers are funding their own parental leave schemes. Between 2013–14 and 2020–21, the proportion of private sector employers offering paid parental leave for primary carers increased from 48.5 per cent to 60 per cent. Employer-funded schemes are more common in female-dominated industries and women continue to account for the overwhelming majority of primary carer's leave utilised in employer-funded schemes, at 88 per cent in 2020–21.¹⁴ Employers are also increasingly offering the same paid parental leave entitlements to all parents, regardless of their gender or position and without distinguishing between primary and secondary carers.

¹³ D Wood and O Emslie, *Dad days: how more gender-equal parental leave could improve the lives of Australian families*, Grattan Institute, 2021.

¹⁴ WGEA, *Australia's gender equality scorecard 2020–21*, 2022, p 28.

Budget highlights: Boosting Paid Parental Leave to support gender equality

The Government is investing \$531.6 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to modernise the Paid Parental Leave scheme and promote a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work within households. The scheme will progressively expand over time to provide a total of 26 weeks of Parental Leave Pay by 1 July 2026, which will deliver greater flexibility for families and support both parents to spend more time with their children. By supporting a more equal distribution of unpaid care responsibilities between men and women, it will also support participation and productivity, providing an economic dividend.

- From 1 July 2023, the Government will provide a total 20-week payment to families, including maintaining a portion reserved for each parent on a 'use it or lose it' basis. Single parents will be able to access the full 20 weeks.
- An additional 2 weeks will be added each year from July 2024 to July 2026, increasing the overall length of payment under the Paid Parental Leave scheme by 6 weeks.
- To improve gender equality under the scheme and make it easier for families to share care, the Government will remove the current requirement that primary claimants of parental leave must be the birth parent. This will make it easier for fathers to claim and remove assumptions about mothers and fathers being 'primary' or 'secondary' carers, allowing families to decide who will claim first and how they will share the entitlement.
- From July 2023, to increase flexibility, parents will be able to take Government-paid leave in blocks as small as a day at a time, with periods of work in between, so parents can use their weeks in a way that works best for them.
- From July 2023, eligibility will be expanded through the introduction of a \$350,000 family income test, which families can be assessed under if they do not meet the individual income test currently set at \$156,647.
 - This will allow around an additional 2,200 families to access the Paid Parental Leave scheme. This will particularly benefit women with incomes above \$156,647 who are the primary income earners in their family, who are currently ineligible to access the scheme even if their partner has no or significantly lower income.
- Eligibility will also be expanded to allow an eligible father or partner to receive Parental Leave Pay, irrespective of whether the birth parent meets the residency requirements. This would allow around an additional 1,500 non-birth parents to access Parental Leave Pay.

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Budget highlights: Boosting Paid Parental Leave to support gender equality (continued)

- To further incentivise the take-up of the payment by fathers and partners, from 1 July 2023 there will be no restrictions to fathers and partners accessing any part of the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme at the same time as employer-funded leave.
- This expansion to the Paid Parental Leave scheme represents the biggest reform to the scheme since its introduction in 2011. This reflects the Government's commitment to shift societal norms about caring responsibilities and achieve economic equality for women.
- To drive continued improvements to the Paid Parental Leave scheme, the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce will examine options to further improve women's economic outcomes, including an optimal model to give families greater support and flexibility, and encourage more equal sharing of leave, including periods of concurrent leave and the provision of 'use it or lose it' weeks.

Based on overseas empirical evidence, it is likely that expansion of the Paid Parental Leave scheme will deliver a range of direct and indirect social, economic and health benefits. These include through the initial support for parents to spend time with their children, and participation and productivity gains in the longer run from parents remaining connected to the workforce due to more equal caring responsibilities.

The changes will provide additional support to families after the birth or adoption of a child. The progressive extension of the current PPL scheme from 20 weeks up to 26 weeks will help families with the cost of raising children while they take time off work during the child's critical first 1,000 days. This will particularly benefit those on lower incomes who may not have access to employer-funded parental leave. Single parents will also benefit from being able to access the full amount.

International evidence suggests that to encourage a more equal usage, a PPL scheme should include a dedicated portion reserved for each parent. In Iceland and Sweden, reserving paid leave for each parent has led to a doubling in the number of parental leave days taken by men.¹⁵ Evidence also shows that when men are active carers early in their children's lives, parents have a more equitable division of care over the longer term, reducing the impact of the 'motherhood penalty' on women's workforce participation, earnings and career progression. This is why the Government has committed to maintaining 'use it or lose it' weeks and having the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce examine the optimal model for the Australian context.

¹⁵ OECD, *Parental leave: where are the fathers?*, 2016.

Prior to the arrival of their first child, women are the primary income earners in around 25 per cent of Australian couples. Removing the requirement that primary claimants of parental leave must be the birth parent – and maintaining a specified portion for secondary carers – will encourage more fathers to take parental leave, supporting a more equal distribution of care and domestic responsibilities. It could also allow mothers who are the primary income earners to work more, and better utilise their skills. This will support family incomes and lift productivity growth.

Business, especially smaller businesses who may not be able to offer their own paid parental leave, will also benefit from the changes. With more people placing increased value on factors such as flexible work, PPL can play an important role in assisting businesses to attract and retain valuable staff.

There are also other potential long-term flow-on effects from higher engagement of fathers and partners in home life. Men's participation in child care has health and emotional benefits for both fathers and their children. Many fathers want to take more leave, as evidenced by the take up of parental leave in the private sector. Supporting fathers to take time off work enables men to take a more active role in care during the early years of their child's life, setting patterns of shared care throughout childhood and supporting generational change in gendered care-giving norms, as children see more diverse role models.

Taken together, the changes to the child care subsidy and the Paid Parental Leave scheme will not only help families to better balance paid work and caring responsibilities, but will also support participation and productivity, providing an additional economic dividend. More equitable PPL and more affordable, quality early childhood education and care will assist to address the structural drivers of the gender pay gap and provide parents greater flexibility and choice.

National efforts to narrow the gender pay gap and create opportunities for women

The Government is committed to minimising the drivers of the gender pay gap and, as announced at the Jobs and Skills Summit, has already made a number of commitments to drive progress. An overview of outcomes from the Jobs and Skills Summit that support gender equality are outlined in Box 4 below.

Box 4: Outcomes from the Jobs and Skills Summit

Women's experiences of the labour market featured prominently at the Jobs and Skills Summit, arising in discussions of the skills, migration, and bargaining systems, as well as sessions about growing productivity and industries of the future. The first panel discussion of the summit focussed on equal opportunities and pay for women and emphasised the shared role that governments, employers and industry have in supporting women's workforce participation and closing the gender pay gap.

Further to the commitments outlined in this statement, other outcomes from the summit to support gender equality included:

- the Australian Government public sector to lead by example by reporting to WGEA and to set targets to improve gender equity in the APS.
- businesses with 500 or more employees to commit to and report to WGEA on measurable targets to improve gender equality in their workplaces
- for the first time, requiring the public reporting of gender pay gaps for businesses with 100 or more employees
- empowering WGEA to work with peak organisations, unions and employers in targeted sectors to develop strategies and actions to increase women's participation and reduce their gender pay gaps
- extending WGEA data collection to include, over time, a more accurate snapshot of the pay gap that exists for First Nations and culturally diverse women as well as women living with disability, in Australian workplaces
- expanding the Respect@Work Council will ensure workers are represented through a permanent seat at the table for unions alongside government, business and civil society.

The Government also committed to developing a Carer Friendly Workplace Framework to assist employers, including smaller businesses, to develop practices to support employees with caring responsibilities, who are predominantly women.

The Government, in partnership with industry and unions, will establish a tripartite National Construction Industry Forum to constructively address issues such as mental health, safety, training, apprentices, productivity, culture, diversity and gender equity in the industry.

Following the summit, Treasury has invited the public to make submissions to the Employment White Paper and will continue to engage the wider community in the lead up to its release in the second half of 2023.

The Government is committed to supporting greater gender diversity across industries and occupations. It is also committed to supporting efforts to address pay inequity arising from the way in which wages are set and negotiated, particularly in low-paid, female-dominated sectors such as aged care. This includes the Government's submission on the Aged Care Work Value Case to the Fair Work Commission supporting a pay rise for aged care workers and the commitment to ensuring that the outcome of the Aged Care Work Value Case is funded.

One of the Government's first actions was to put forward a submission to the Fair Work Commission advocating that wages for Australia's low-paid workers should not go backwards. These workers, many of whom are young, female and in casual employment, experience the worst impacts of inflation and have the least capacity to draw on savings. In June 2022, the Fair Work Commission announced a 5.2 per cent increase in the National Minimum Wage as part of its Annual Wage Review decision. This increase meant that from 1 July 2022, the National Minimum Wage increased from \$20.33 to \$21.38 per hour (or \$40 per week for a full-time worker). The Fair Work Commission also increased modern award wages by 4.6 per cent, subject to a minimum increase of \$40 per week for full-time adult award classifications.

In addition to the initiatives to support more equal opportunities for women to participate in the workforce – including delivering more affordable early childhood education and care and supporting more fathers to take parental leave – the Government has committed to a range of changes to address pay inequity and improve job security.

Budget highlights: national efforts to narrow the gender pay gap

Addressing pay inequity

- The Government will embed gender equity in the Fair Work Commission's decision-making process by making it an object of the *Fair Work Act 2009* and establishing a statutory equal remuneration principle. Two new Expert Panels on Pay Equity and the Care and Community Sector will be established in the Fair Work Commission, supported by a research unit, to provide expertise in assessing pay equity claims and award variations. These changes will improve the Fair Work Commission's capacity to hear and determine applications from undervalued, female-dominated sectors, helping to close the gender pay gap.
- In addition, the gender pay gaps of large companies, with 100 or more employees, will be publicly reported by WGEA to improve transparency and encourage change. Pay secrecy clauses in employment contracts will also be prohibited.

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Budget highlights: national efforts to narrow the gender pay gap (continued)

Improving job security and reducing industry and occupational segregation

- The Government will make job security an object of the *Fair Work Act 2009* and limit the use of fixed-term contracts. This will provide a pathway to more secure employment with greater entitlements, particularly for women who form the majority of fixed-term contract workers.
- The Government will strengthen the right to request flexible working arrangements by amending the National Employment Standards to establish a transparent process for employers to follow when dealing with such requests. It will also improve the dispute resolution process to help employees and employers deal with disagreements.
- The Government will implement a Digital and Tech Skills Compact with businesses and unions to help address skills shortages and grow the Australian tech sector. Targets for groups who are under-represented in digital and tech fields will be included.
- Decarbonising the economy will create new employment and educational opportunities for women. The Powering Australia Plan will support jobs in emerging industries, such as renewable energy, electric vehicles and agriculture and carbon farming, providing women with greater career choice and opportunities for workforce participation.
- The Government has committed to a number of measures that will include a focus on increased gender diversity across industries and occupations. This includes the \$1 billion one-year National Skills Agreement jointly funded with states and territories to deliver 180,000 fee-free TAFE and community-based vocational education places from January 2023, targeted to priority groups, including women facing economic equality issues and those studying in non-traditional fields. A new longer-term National Skills Agreement will also be negotiated with states to drive VET sector reform and support women's workforce participation and equality, and an Australian Universities Accord will be established to review higher education, including equity in higher education.

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Budget highlights: national efforts to narrow the gender pay gap (continued)

- To consider the persistent under-representation of women in STEM, the Government has announced an independent Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review. The review will evaluate existing women in STEM programs in the Industry and Science portfolio and make recommendations on the most effective approaches to improve equity and representation of women and other under-represented groups in STEM education and work. Additional funding for the Women in STEM Ambassador will support research to underpin this review, while further funding for the Women in STEM and Entrepreneurships Grants program will ensure momentum is not lost.
- The Government is also supporting new digital career opportunities in the Australian Public Service. Under the APS Digital Traineeship Program, priority groups, including women returning to the workforce or seeking a career change, will be supported to undertake a Certificate IV qualification.
- The Australian Skills Guarantee will ensure one in 10 workers on major, federally-funded government projects is an apprentice, trainee or paid cadet. The Guarantee will include targets to ensure more women benefit from the economic opportunities created by government investment, gaining skills and qualifications.

Improving women's housing security

Secure and affordable long-term housing is fundamental to wellbeing. Housing insecurity and homelessness can have considerable impacts on the capacity of individuals to participate in the economy and society, with flow-on impacts for women later in life. The Government is committed to improving lifetime economic outcomes for women, including by supporting greater housing security. Home ownership provides long-term social and economic benefits and can be an important way to generate wealth for low- to middle-income Australians.

Around 67.6 per cent of people in Australia live in a home owned outright, have a mortgage or have purchased under a shared equity scheme. Home ownership rates are broadly similar between men and women. However, there are some groups at particular risk of housing insecurity, including women following relationship breakdown or divorce. For example, after a relationship breakdown, women who lose their home are slower to repurchase than men. Grattan analysis of HILDA data shows that 5 years post-separation, only 34 per cent of women who lose their home will have been able to purchase another, and only 44 per cent manage to buy a home within 10 years. In comparison, 42 per cent of men who lose their home during separation purchase another home within 5 years, and 55 per cent within 10 years.¹⁶

The Australian Human Rights Commission found that older women – aged 55 and over – were the fastest growing cohort of homeless Australians between 2011 and 2016, increasing by 31 per cent. Due to the ongoing shortage of affordable housing, the ageing population, and the significant gap in lifetime wealth accumulation between men and women, the Commission stated that it was likely that this trend would continue.¹⁷

The Home Guarantee Scheme has provided important assistance to single parents who have struggled to save enough for a deposit while paying rent. The Family Home Guarantee supports single parents with a deposit of as little as 2 per cent and has predominantly supported single women with dependent children (84 per cent of buyers).

16 B Coates, *Levelling the playing field: it's time for a national shared equity scheme*, Grattan Institute, 2022.

17 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Risk of Homelessness in Older Women*, 2019.

Budget highlights: supporting women's housing security

- The Government is bringing states and territories, the Australian Local Government Association, investors and representatives from the construction sector together under a new Housing Accord.
- As part of the Accord, the Commonwealth has committed \$350 million to support the supply of an additional 10,000 affordable dwellings over 5 years, from 2024, with availability payments over the longer-term. The Accord will seek to facilitate superannuation and institutional capital investment in social and affordable housing, alongside established state and territory programs.
- The Government is supporting the delivery of more social and affordable housing by investing \$10 billion in a Housing Australia Future Fund. The returns from the Fund will build around 30,000 new social and affordable housing properties in its first 5 years and includes a range of elements to support women.
 - 20,000 social housing dwellings will be supported, an estimated 4,000 of which will be allocated for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence and older women who are at risk of homelessness.
 - 10,000 affordable homes will be allocated for frontline workers, including professions with majority female participation such as nurses and cleaners.
- Each year, investment returns from the Fund will be used to fund social and affordable housing projects. Additionally, a portion of the investment returns will be made available to fund acute housing needs on an ongoing basis. In the first 5 years, this will include:
 - \$200 million for the repair, maintenance and improvements of housing in remote First Nations communities
 - \$100 million for crisis and transitional housing options for women and children fleeing family and domestic violence and older women on low incomes at risk of homelessness
 - \$30 million for housing and specialist services for veterans experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- Other new housing initiatives are also expected to support women. This includes the Regional First Home Buyer Guarantee, which supports regional Australians by reducing deposit requirements for home ownership. In addition, the Government's new shared equity scheme, Help to Buy, will help Australians buy a home with a smaller deposit, mortgage and repayments. Recognising that women face a range of inequalities that can provide a barrier to owning and retaining a home, the uptake of the schemes by women will be evaluated over time.

Ending violence against women and children

Every Australian deserves to live a life free from violence. All women in Australia should be able to live safely and without fear, whether at home, at school, at work or in their community. There are a range of health, social and economic aspects of gender-based violence that can significantly impact the lives of individuals, families, communities and society as a whole.

The Government is making a record investment of \$1.7 billion to end violence against women and children. Women's safety is a national priority, and the Government will provide the focus and leadership needed to deliver change. The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* outlines the vision of the Government, in partnership with state and territory governments in Australia, to end violence against women and children in one generation. This chapter examines the impacts and drivers of gender-based violence and provides an overview of the Government's commitments to strengthen prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing efforts.

Too many women and children in Australia experience gender-based violence. This encompasses different forms of violence including family, domestic and sexual violence including sexual harassment; trafficking of women and children; violence against women in institutions; financial abuse and technology-facilitated abuse.

Violence against women arises in the context of gender inequality and is driven by societal attitudes that condone violence, as well as gender stereotyping and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression and control. When the drivers of gender-based violence intersect with other forms of discrimination, including on the basis of ethnicity, sexuality, class and disability status, it can influence the prevalence, nature and dynamics of violence, and women's experiences of violence.¹⁸

Violence against women and children is not inevitable. The Government, in partnership with state and territory governments across Australia, is committed to addressing the underlying factors that drive gender-based violence, as well as rates of violence. The National Plan, released on 17 October 2022, is the national policy framework that will guide efforts and actions over the next decade.

¹⁸ Our Watch, *Change the Story: Second Edition*, 2021.

The funding outlined in this Statement supports the ambitions of the National Plan, including to prevent gender-based violence, of all forms, before it begins, to support early intervention so that violence doesn't escalate and perpetrators are held to account, and to respond to the needs of victim-survivors and support their recovery and healing. Throughout all initiatives is a recognition that the lived experience of victim-survivors must be at the core of this work if we are to achieve an Australia free of gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence – key statistics

<p>On average, one woman is killed by an intimate partner every 10 days</p>	<p>One in 3 women have experienced violence by a partner, other known person or a stranger since the age of 15</p>
<p>First Nations women aged 15 years and over are 34 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be hospitalised as a result of family violence</p>	<p>73% of women aged 24 to 30 with a disability or illness report experiencing sexual violence at some point in their life</p>
<p>Intimate partner violence is the main preventable risk factor contributing to illness and death in women aged 18 to 44</p>	<p>One in 4 Australian women has experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15</p>
<p>Almost 2 in every 5 women experienced sexual harassment at work between 2013–2018</p>	<p>Elder abuse prevalence rates are similar for men and women – men are more likely to experience physical abuse and more women experience psychological abuse and neglect</p>

Prevalence and impacts of gender-based violence

Violence against women and children is a problem of epidemic proportions in Australia. While all experiences of violence, abuse or harassment are unique, evidence clearly shows most perpetrators of gender-based violence are men, and most victims and survivors are women.¹⁹ The prevalence of violence against women and children has not significantly decreased over the past 12 years. Women are most likely to experience physical and sexual violence in their home at the hands of a male partner or ex-partner.

Rates of violence are even higher for certain groups, such as First Nations women. A woman is also more likely to experience violence at particular life stages, such as while pregnant or while separating from a partner.²⁰ Women with disability are at more risk of particular forms of violence. For example, women with disability may experience forced sterilisation, seclusion and restrictive practices, and violence in a range of institutional and service settings such as residential institutions and aged care facilities. Women and girls with disability also experience higher rates of sexual violence, while women in aged care settings also experience sexual violence.²¹

Specific forms of gender-based violence such as migration-related abuse, dowry abuse, early and forced marriage, trafficking and female genital mutilation, may also disproportionately impact women and girls from some cultural backgrounds and migrant and refugee women. LGBTIQ+ people experience violence within their intimate partner relationships at similar levels to those in cisgender heterosexual relationships. LGBTIQ+ people can also experience significant violence within their families of origin, particularly as children and young people. Women who identify as lesbian or bisexual experience higher rates of sexual violence than heterosexual women, while trans people report higher rates of sexual assault than the general population, and trans women of colour report higher rates of assault by strangers.

During the past decade, there has been an increase in sexual violence in all settings including online, with perpetrators using new mechanisms, including violence facilitated by technology. Sexual assault is a serious crime that can have devastating, cumulative, and long-lasting impacts on the lives of victim-survivors, their families and communities. Lifetime prevalence data indicates 51 per cent of women in their twenties and 34 per cent of women in their forties have experienced sexual violence.²² Younger people aged 18 to 29 years old also experience higher rates of online sexual harassment compared to other age groups, with two-fifths of 18- to 29-year-olds having experienced sexual harassment online or via some form of technology. See Box 5 for analysis on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

19 ABS, *Personal Safety Survey*, 2016.

20 H Boxall and S Lawler, *How does domestic violence escalate over time?*, AIC, 2021.

21 ABS, *Disability and Violence*, 2021.

22 N Townsend, D Loxton, N Egan, I Barnes, E Byrnes and P Forder, *A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia: Findings from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health*, ANROWS, 2022.

In 2021, police recorded 31,118 victims of sexual assault in Australia, an increase of 13 per cent from 2020, and representing the 10th year in a row of increased reporting.²³ Sexual assault, however, continues to be under-reported to police in Australia. For those who do choose to report, prosecution rates are low and conviction rates are even lower. This illustrates the barriers faced by victim-survivors throughout the criminal justice system, the challenges of prosecuting these offences, and the importance of a coordinated national response.

The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health indicated that witnessing domestic violence perpetrated against a parent or parental figure as a child, and being exposed to household distress, increased the probability of experiencing a violent relationship as an adult.²⁴ For some cohorts, sexual violence during childhood is a risk factor for experiencing further violence. Teenage boys who have been convicted for sexual violence are likely to have experienced domestic and family violence as children.

The number of women seeking help through formal services has increased significantly. In 2020–21 there were over 285,000 contacts (phone and online chat) answered by 1800RESPECT, the national sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling service, compared to 59,500 contacts in 2015–16. This increase could reflect actual changes to rates of violence; an increased propensity to report violence due to feeling supported to identify and share experiences; increased reporting of historical crimes; or a combination of these.

Short-term and medium-term increases are expected to occur as awareness continues to improve and as increased support is available for people experiencing violence. It is important to note, however, that as many women experiencing violence and abuse within their relationships do not engage with police or government or non-government agencies – particularly while they remain in a violent relationship – there may still be significant gaps between prevalence of violence and formal reporting rates.

²³ ABS, *Recorded Crime – Victims*, 2021.

²⁴ D Loxton, N Townsend, P Forder and J Coombe, *Domestic violence, risk factors and health*, Women's Health Australia, 2018.

Financial and economic impacts

Violence against women also has significant ramifications for women's economic equality, with a 2011 national domestic violence and the workplace survey finding that 48 per cent of women who had experienced violence saying that it reduced their capacity to attend work.²⁵ Victims and survivors of sexual violence are up to 45 per cent more likely to experience high levels of financial stress than those who have not experienced sexual violence. KPMG modelling also estimates that nationally the cost of violence against women and their children is \$26 billion each year, with victim-survivors bearing approximately 50 per cent of that cost.²⁶

Many women experiencing violence can also face a stark choice to stay in a relationship where violence is occurring or escalating, or to leave the relationship but face ongoing financial hardship, homelessness or poverty. There can be a range of reasons why women stay or leave, including because they want to try to work things out. Having no money or nowhere else to go are some of the reasons women identify for leaving a violent relationship, only to return to it later.²⁷

25 L McFerran, *Safe at home, safe at work? National domestic violence and the workplace survey*, University of New South Wales, 2011.

26 KPMG, *The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia – Final Report*, KPMG, 2016.

27 A Summers, *The Choice: Violence or Poverty*, University of Technology Sydney, 2022, p 10.

Box 5: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Workplace sexual harassment is driven by power disparities, particularly gender inequality. Other forms of discrimination – for example, discrimination on the basis of race, disability or sexuality – can also drive sexual harassment. As outlined in the Respect@Work report, almost 2 in every 5 women (39 per cent) experienced sexual harassment at work between 2013 and 2018 (compared to 26 per cent of men). Most sexual harassment in the workplace is not formally reported.

The Respect@Work report also reported that First Nations people are more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than non-Indigenous Australians (53 per cent compared to 32 per cent). Broken down by gender, over half of First Nations women (55 per cent) and half of First Nations men (50 per cent) reported they had experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past 5 years.

People with disability were more likely than those without disability to have been sexually harassed in their workplace in the past 5 years (44 per cent and 32 per cent respectively). People with a disability report higher rates of sexual harassment, with women with disability (52 per cent) more likely than men (35 per cent) to have experienced workplace sexual harassment during this period. People who identify as gay or lesbian (47 per cent), bisexual (57 per cent) or with another sexual orientation (55 per cent) were more likely than people who identify as straight or heterosexual (31 per cent) to have been sexually harassed in the workplace in the past 5 years.

Male-dominated workplaces have a higher prevalence of sexual harassment. This is due to a range of factors, including an unequal gender ratio, senior leadership that is predominantly male, and women performing roles that are considered 'atypical' for women.

Deloitte Access Economics modelling undertaken for the Respect@Work report estimated that in 2018, workplace sexual harassment cost the Australian economy \$2.6 billion in lost productivity. International research has also indicated that the financial impacts of workplace sexual harassment are felt more acutely by women, as they are more likely than men to make lateral moves or take pay cuts in response to experiences of harassment.

Budget highlights: Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace

- The Government is prioritising women's safety in the workplace by providing \$42.5 million to fully implement recommendations of the Respect@Work report. This includes establishing a positive duty on employers to take reasonable measures to prevent workplace sexual harassment, supported by the Australian Human Rights Commission.
- In addition, the Government will support the establishment of Working Women's Centres in all states and territories, which provide free advice and assistance to women on issues including workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and wage theft.
- The Government will also amend the *Fair Work Act 2009* to expressly prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace, enabling the Fair Work Commission and Fair Work Ombudsman to deal with disputes alleging workplace sexual harassment. The Government will provide \$15.1 million over 4 years to implement the new prohibition.

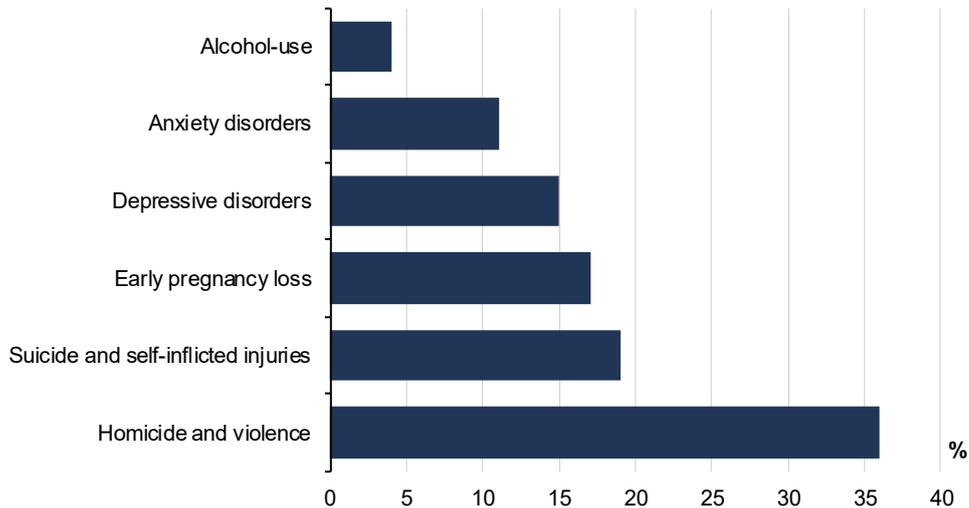
Health impacts

Gender-based violence can have significant implications for the health of victim-survivors, both physically and emotionally, which can continue to affect them throughout their lives. In 2019–20, more than 3 in 10 assault hospitalisations were the result of family and domestic violence.²⁸ Women made up 73 per cent of these hospitalisations. Victim survivors can experience physical injuries including life-long disability and traumatic brain injuries. The common impacts of violence against women and children can include poorer health; mental health issues such as depressive and anxiety disorders; early pregnancy loss; alcohol use disorders; economic insecurity; reduced capacity to study; and poorer language skills. Even if a child has not experienced abuse directly there can be a long-lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of children who grow up around domestic violence.

In 2018, intimate partner violence contributed to 228 deaths in Australia and 1.4 per cent of the total burden of disease and injury among Australian women. Burden of disease refers to the quantified impact of living with and dying prematurely from a disease or injury. Chart 11 shows the disease burden attributable to intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence, commonly referred to as 'domestic violence', refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages or domestic relationships) that cause physical, sexual or psychological harm. It is the most common form of violence against women.

28 AIHW, *Family, domestic and sexual violence*, 2022.

Chart 11: Disease burden attributable to intimate partner violence



Source: AIHW, *Family, domestic and sexual violence*, 2021.

Note: Burden estimated in females only, aged 15–44 years.

First Nations women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised because of violence than non-Indigenous women. They report 3 times as many incidents of sexual violence as non-Indigenous women and are more likely to die due to assault. Family violence – which is the term preferred by First Nations people – has been associated with various negative health impacts, including higher rates of miscarriage, pre-term birth and low birthweight, depression, anxiety, suicide and other long-term health consequences for women and children.

Preventing gender-based violence

The Government is committed to stopping violence against women and children by addressing its underlying drivers. While fewer Australians hold attitudes that support violence against women, there remains a persistent mistrust of women’s reports of violence and a concerning lack of understanding about sexual consent among young Australians 16 to 24 years of age.²⁹ Changing social attitudes and behaviours, including underlying attitudes related to gender equality, is critical to achieving long-term intergenerational change and ultimately an end to gender-based violence.

²⁹ K Webster, K Diemer, N Honey, S Mannix, J Mickle, J Morgan, A Parkes, V Politoff, A Powell, J Stubbs and A Ward., *Australians’ attitudes to violence against women and gender equality: Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)*, ANROWS, 2018.

The National Plan takes a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to ending violence against women and children in one generation. The National Plan's objectives are based on evidence and span the continuum of prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing. The domains are interconnected, with each action reinforcing the effectiveness of others. Responses that hold perpetrators accountable reduce the recurrence of violence while recovery and healing for women and children, for example, contributes to long-term prevention.

The National Plan takes an inclusive and intersectional approach, acknowledging the experiences, recovery and safety needs of First Nations families; LGBTIQ+ people; women with disability; children and young people; older women; women in regional, rural and remote areas; migrant and refugee women; and women on temporary visas. It also recognises the many forms that gender-based violence can take, including sexual violence and harassment. The National Plan will be implemented through two 5-year Action Plans detailing the actions and investment by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to implement priority areas across the domains.

A standalone First Nations National Plan to end violence against women and family violence will also be developed. It will recognise the disproportionately high rates of violence and intersecting, layered forms of discrimination and disadvantage impacting the safety of First Nation families and communities. The First Nations National Plan will be developed through a comprehensive, consultative process that supports genuine partnership and shared decision-making, as outlined in the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*.

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (the Commission) will amplify the voices of victim-survivors and track progress against the National Plan. The Commission will deliver a yearly report to the Parliament on progress against the National Plan to help hold governments accountable.

Effective research, data and evaluation across systems is essential to better understanding the underlying drivers of violence, and to inform future responses and investment. The Government is committed to maintaining and building the long-term data sets needed to measure national progress.

Budget highlights: Consent and respectful relationships education

- The Government is investing in a range of prevention activities to stop violence at the start, including consent and respectful relationships education in Australian schools. Respectful relationships education focusses on changing the attitudes, behaviours, norms, and practices that create and foster the environments in which gender-based violence occurs. The education system can be a catalyst for generational and cultural change by engaging schools to actively address the drivers of gender-based violence.
- Ensuring that all children in Australia can access age-appropriate and evidence-based consent and respectful relationships education is an important strategy for enabling discussions about gender roles and norms, promoting gender equality and working towards ending gender-based violence. The Government is providing \$83.5 million to help make sure all Australian school students are able to access high quality, age-appropriate consent and respectful relationships education.

National leadership to support access to justice

Characteristics of the criminal justice system, including the use of legal terminology, complex processes, the adversarial system and long trials, can act as barriers to victim-survivors accessing justice. This particularly impacts people whose ability to participate in the criminal justice system may already be impaired due to trauma or mental, physical or emotional factors.³⁰

Under Australia's federal system of government, each state and territory government is responsible for administering its own criminal justice system, including criminal laws, policing, courts and corrections. This includes the determination of domestic, family and sexual violence crimes and the provision of police and court ordered intervention orders. While state and territory governments are primarily responsible for criminal justice responses to family, domestic and sexual violence, nonetheless the scale and prevalence of this violence, and the associated barriers to justice, make it an issue that requires national collaboration.

³⁰ Department of Social Services, *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-32*, 2022.

The National Plan highlights key areas for improvement including enhancing access to equitable justice outcomes for all victim-survivors; identifying and removing barriers to reporting violence and engaging with the criminal justice process; investigating and prosecuting violence against women and children including sexual violence; ensuring police and prosecutors have the tools and training they need to respond effectively to the use of violence; and strengthening responses to perpetrators of violence.

The Government is also taking a national leadership role to address sexual violence and is committed to working with states and territories to strengthen sexual assault laws. This includes improving the protections offered through the legal system to those affected by gender-based violence. On 12 August 2022, the Standing Council of Attorneys-General endorsed a 5-year *Work Plan to Strengthen Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault 2022–2027* (the work plan). Under the work plan, all jurisdictions will seek to take collective and individual action to improve the experiences of victim-survivors of sexual assault in the criminal justice system.

Budget highlights: supporting a coordinated approach to prevent violence

- The Government is investing \$1.0 million to establish an advisory group to ensure engagement with victim-survivors throughout the life of the First Action Plan, providing valuable insights from people with lived experience.
- This Budget provides \$5 million in additional funding to strengthen the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's program of engagement activities and to deliver evidence-based advice to Government.
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety will receive funding of \$23.3 million to ensure that data and evidence is available to design appropriate policy interventions.
- Increased funding of \$104.4 million is being provided to support Our Watch, Australia's national leader for the primary prevention of gender-based violence.
- The Government is investing in new and existing campaigns to change attitudes and behaviours, including \$55.3 million for additional phases of the Stop it at the Start campaign and \$32.2 million to promote the importance of consensual and respectful relationships.

Helping people experiencing violence

A range of intersecting services and systems work to reduce and address violence against women, and support victim-survivors who experience it. These include specialist services, housing and homelessness systems (refer to Box 6), financial counselling, and the health and criminal justice systems. The key priority of the National Plan is the need for a comprehensive and person-centred service system, that helps to keep women and children safe, reduces the reoccurrence of violence and holds perpetrators to account.

The Government is committed to providing better support for women when they make the choice to leave a violent relationship. The Escaping Violence Payment trial provides financial assistance to eligible individuals of up to \$5,000, including cash/cash equivalents of up to \$1,500 and the remaining funds in goods, services and supports, to establish a home free from violence.

Health systems and services play a critical role in responding to family, domestic and sexual violence, as well as supporting victim-survivors with recovery and healing. General practitioners are often the first person a victim-survivor turns to for support and advice. Under the National Plan, effective intervention approaches will be embedded in a variety of settings and sectors. Health service providers such as general practitioners will be supported to identify and respond to those at risk of gender-based violence.

Budget highlights: support for victim-survivors

- The Government is investing \$240 million to support the ongoing demand for individualised financial support packages to assist individuals establish a life free from violence, through the Escaping Violence Payment.
- The Government is amending the *Fair Work Act 2009* to provide access to 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave and will provide support to small businesses to understand and implement the new entitlement. Importantly, noting that women experiencing family and domestic violence are more likely to be employed in casual work, the leave will apply to all types of employees, including casuals.
- The Government is investing \$13.9 million in a First Action Plan Priorities Fund to support programs that will address emerging priorities.
- Specialised Family Violence Services will receive funding of up to \$40.4 million to expand support to assist individuals, couples and families who are experiencing, witnessing or at risk of family and domestic violence. Funding of up to \$57.9 million is also being provided for the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes and the Safe Phones programs. Funding of \$100 million will continue the Safe Places program.
- The Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot is receiving \$12.6 million in additional funding to provide eligible temporary visa holders with financial support and legal assistance, including migration support.
- Dedicated funding of \$10.7 million will be provided to the Northern Territory under the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence National Partnership, recognising the higher rates of violence and increased complexity of remote service delivery.
- The Government is investing \$8.0 million in the Support for Trafficked People Program for victims (identified and referred by the Australian Federal Police) of human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices. The program targets individual needs including accommodation, medical treatment, legal and migration advice and social support.
- Funding of \$8.4 million is being provided to pilot a new service model that will provide victim-survivors of sexual assault with greater access to specialised legal support and guidance.
- A \$48.7 million investment to expand the Family and Domestic Violence Primary Health Network Pilot will assist primary care providers with early identification and intervention of family, domestic and sexual violence and ensure coordinated referrals to support services. Additional funding of \$67.2 million will also be provided to pilot a model of trauma-informed recovery care through 6 Primary Health Networks to improve coordination and access to services. \$25.0 million will support the Illawarra Women's Health Centre to establish a women's trauma recovery centre.

Box 6: Housing for women and children experiencing violence

Safe, accessible and stable accommodation is crucial for the safety and recovery of women and children impacted by violence. Family and domestic violence is the leading cause of women and children leaving their homes in Australia, with those who have experienced family and domestic violence making up 42 per cent of Specialist Homelessness Services clients in 2020–21. Housing stress is a significant barrier to permanently leaving a violent partner. Women are more likely to return to their partner if they have difficulty maintaining independent accommodation, with one in 5 women returning to violent partners because they had no financial support, or nowhere else to go.

Social and affordable housing provides an important safety net for women. In the 3 main social housing programs (public housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing, and community housing), 55 per cent of main tenants are women. Main tenants also tend to be older (33 per cent in community housing are aged 55 or older) and one-third of households include a person with disability. First Nations people make up 15 per cent of social housing households.

The Government's Housing Australia Future Fund will fund crisis and transitional housing options for women and children leaving family and domestic violence, and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness. This is an important component of the broader \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund, which will build 30,000 new social and affordable housing properties in the first 5 years. Of the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund, the returns from \$1.6 billion will support long term housing for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness. This will provide an estimated 4,000 social housing properties. A portion of the investment returns from the Housing Australia Future Fund will also be made available to fund acute housing needs on an ongoing basis. In the first 5 years, this will include \$100 million for crisis and transitional housing options for women and children escaping violence.

The Australian Government also provides funding to the states and territories under the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes initiative. The initiative provides a range of safety responses such as home security updates (e.g. alarms, locks, surveillance cameras, electronic sweeping and debugging devices) to help women stay safe in their homes. It is expected to benefit approximately 32,000 women over 5 years. The Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program supports the renovation, building or purchase of accommodation for women and children leaving family and domestic violence. Funding under the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program will increase the number of new and appropriate crisis or emergency accommodation places for First Nations women and children, women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women and children with disability. This additional investment will fund up to 720 new safe places, bringing the total number of safe places to around 1,500.

Strengthening the workforce and improving access to supports and services

It is important that all people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence are supported to access support and services and to leave violent relationships if and when they choose to do so. The National Plan outlines the need for a skilled workforce and institutions that can adequately respond to trauma in a coordinated and integrated way.

Workers across a range of sectors support efforts to end or respond to family, domestic and sexual violence. This includes case managers, counsellors, health professionals, researchers, police officers, justice system officials, trainers and educators, allied workers such as financial counsellors, as well as managers and leaders.

With more victim-survivors seeking help, frontline services are experiencing increased demand, putting increasing pressure on the workforce. This not only risks women and children experiencing or escaping violence not receiving adequate support, but also presents ongoing challenges for workers who undertake demanding and challenging roles. The workforce in the domestic, family and sexual violence sectors is strongly female-dominated, with 83.4 per cent of workers in 2018 identifying as female.

The legal system, particularly the family law system, also plays an important role in offering protection to those affected by violence and abuse, including professional development for key personnel to enhance understanding and capability when engaging with victim-survivors.

The Government recognises the critical role of those who lead and support efforts to prevent and respond to violence, and to assist victims-survivors with recovery and healing. Strengthening the capacity of the prevention workforce and specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services, along with improving access to support services, better coordinating and integrating systems and services, and delivering services in a culturally safe way will support progress towards reducing the prevalence of gender-based violence.

Budget highlights: improving supports and services

- This Budget will provide \$169.4 million over 4 years to fund 500 frontline service and community workers to support women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence, with support targeted to women and children in rural, regional and remote areas; First Nations people; the culturally and linguistically diverse community; women with disability; and the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Funding of up to \$39.7 million is being provided to support Lifeline Australia to continue delivering DV-alert, a nationally accredited training program designed to help health, allied health and community frontline workers better understand and identify domestic and family violence and improve their referral and support skills.
- The Government is investing up to \$12.6 million in education and training on family, domestic and sexual violence for community frontline workers, health professionals and the justice sector, including accredited training to support frontline workers engaging with victim-survivors and capacity-building training for judiciary and legal practitioners.
- Funding will be available for targeted training packages to enhance law enforcement responses, including in relation to coercive control, technology facilitated abuse, child safety and sexual assault.
- The Government is investing \$3.3 million in strengthening criminal justice frameworks and responses to family, domestic and sexual violence, including scoping a witness intermediary scheme to support vulnerable witnesses to give evidence, a scoping study on alternative reporting mechanisms for sexual assault, and a national review of family and domestic violence order frameworks.
- The Lighthouse Project, a family safety risk screening and specialised case management pilot, will receive \$87.9 million to be extended to all 15 primary family law registries and additional Indigenous Liaison Officers will be engaged to further enhance culturally responsive support for First Nations Australians across the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.
- The Government is providing additional funding over 4 years to state and territory Legal Aid Commissions to ensure the ongoing viability of the Family Violence and Cross-Examination of Parties Scheme. This scheme protects victims of family violence in family law proceedings by banning direct-cross examination in certain circumstances, and instead requiring cross-examination to be conducted by a legal representative.
- \$3.0 million is being provided to restore funding to the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum to improve access to justice for First Nations people experiencing violence.

Holding perpetrators to account

Holding perpetrators of gender-based violence to account, is crucial to shifting the burden of responding to violence from victim-survivors and is a key area of action in the National Plan. Accountability can take different forms, including through the application of the justice system and in the community. Perpetrator interventions can assist perpetrators to voluntarily address their behaviours and be accountable for their violence. Perpetrator interventions should be evidence-based and may include mainstream and specialist services, drug and alcohol services, behaviour change programs, police issuing protection notices promptly and courts appropriately dealing with breaches of orders.

With around 50 per cent of offenders committing a further domestic violence offence within 4 years of their initial offence, recidivism rates must also be addressed through strategies that end repeating patterns of behaviour.

In recent years there has been increased community awareness and recognition of coercive control as a pattern of behaviour that underlies multiple forms of abuse. Coercive control includes regulating and controlling the day-to-day life of a person through threats, humiliation, isolation from friends and family, restricting a person's movement, rigid rules, financial abuse, stalking and monitoring.

The Australian Government, in partnership with the states and territories, is developing National Principles to Address Coercive Control. These Principles will develop a common national understanding of coercive control and its impacts, help raise awareness of coercive control, inform more effective responses to family and domestic violence, and promote more consistent support and safety outcomes for victim-survivors.

Budget highlights: addressing perpetrator behaviour

- The Government is providing \$10.8 million to support No To Violence to deliver:
 - a Men's Referral Service offering confidential telephone counselling and referrals for perpetrators of domestic violence to help change their behaviour
 - the Brief Intervention Service which provides multi-session telephone counselling to men seeking support to change their violent or controlling behaviour.
- The Government is investing \$25.0 million in states and territories to work in partnership to apply innovative approaches to address perpetrator behaviour, which may include technology-based solutions such as electronic monitoring.
- The Government is providing \$34.8 million to establish a new early intervention trial for young men and boys aged 12 to 18 years who present with adverse childhood experiences including family or domestic violence, and who are at risk of perpetrating family, domestic or sexual violence.

Gender equality, health and wellbeing

Gender can be a significant determinant of different health experiences and outcomes. Understanding the different health experiences of women and men is essential to improving outcomes for all Australians. Not taking these experiences and outcomes into account can have serious ramifications, including in relation to the diagnosis and treatment of a range of diseases and conditions. This chapter recognises the key role that the female-dominated health and aged care workforce play as part of the health system, as well as the significance of sport in progressing gender equality.

Advancing gender equality is key to improving health outcomes for women and men. The World Health Organization notes that 'gender inequality and discrimination faced by women and girls puts their health and wellbeing at risk', and this is evident in relation to the impacts of violence against women. Harmful gender norms also contribute to increased health risks for men and boys including, for example, where men are less likely to seek health care and more likely to undertake harmful use of drugs and alcohol.³¹

Socioeconomic factors are also associated with health outcomes, with people in lower socioeconomic groups at greater risk of poor health; having higher rates of illness, disability and death; and living shorter lives than people from higher socioeconomic groups. First Nations women can also experience poorer health outcomes for various reasons, including due to challenges in accessing culturally safe health care. Noting the importance of a strong health system, investing in efforts to improve women's economic equality will also support better health outcomes.

Understanding the different health experiences of women and men is essential to improving outcomes of all Australians. Governments, health peak bodies, researchers and practitioners can all play a role in applying a gender lens to health issues to improve outcomes for all Australians. Considering gender impacts assists in targeting health responses according to biological, social and cultural differences. It also ensures that incorrect assumptions of gender neutrality or unconscious bias are not compounding health inequalities, including in relation to trials and medical research. With Australian Government health expenditure accounting for \$106.2 billion in 2021–22, about \$4,090 per person, it is also important that funding is effectively and appropriately targeted.

³¹ World Health Organization, *Gender and Health*, 2021.

Gender equality and health – key statistics

<p>Life expectancy for people born in 2018–20</p> <p>Females: 85.3 years Males: 81.2 years</p>	<p>Life expectancy for First Nations people born in 2015–17</p> <p>Females: 75.6 years Males: 71.6 years</p>
<p>Leading causes of death in 2021</p> <p>Females: dementia (including Alzheimer's disease) Males: Ischaemic Heart Disease</p>	<p>Likelihood of having one or more chronic conditions</p> <p>Females: 56.5% Males: 49.5%</p>
<p>Disability prevalence</p> <p>Females: 17.8% Males: 17.6%</p>	
<p>Prevalence of mental disorders (a 12-month mental disorder)</p> <p>Females: 24.6% Males: 18.0%</p>	

While a wide range of factors – including biological, behavioural and environmental factors – influence health outcomes, gender inequality can also contribute. Bias in health care, including in the development of drugs, other health technologies and diagnostics, can result in misdiagnosis and the administration of treatments that are ineffective, harmful or even fatal. Studies suggest that women are more likely to suffer adverse side effects of medications because drug dosages have historically been based on clinical trials conducted on men. Increased diversity of people participating in clinical trials and drug development processes is needed to ensure differences are identified and accounted for as part of the health care response. See Box 7 for an overview of applying a gender lens to health issues.

Box 7: Applying a gender lens to health issues

A range of Government initiatives are underway to better understand how factors like gender, age, geographic location, and socioeconomic status determine health outcomes.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (the Council) is Australia's peak body for supporting health and medical research. The Council develops health advice for the Australian community, health professionals and governments, and provides advice on ethical behaviour in health care and in the conduct of health and medical research. In line with the *2020–2030 National Women's Health Strategy*, the Council is working with its expert committees to develop a statement on sex and gender analysis in research. Research funded by the Council, including clinical trials, will be required to comply with the statement. The statement will recognise the importance of integrating sex and gender analysis in research design, ensuring consistent use of sex and gender classifications in data collection and analysis, and encouraging early engagement and co-design with relevant stakeholders and communities.

Since 2012, the Council has introduced a range of initiatives to improve gender equity across its grant program. The Council has recently introduced new measures to address systemic disadvantages faced by women and non-binary applicants to its Investigator Grant scheme.

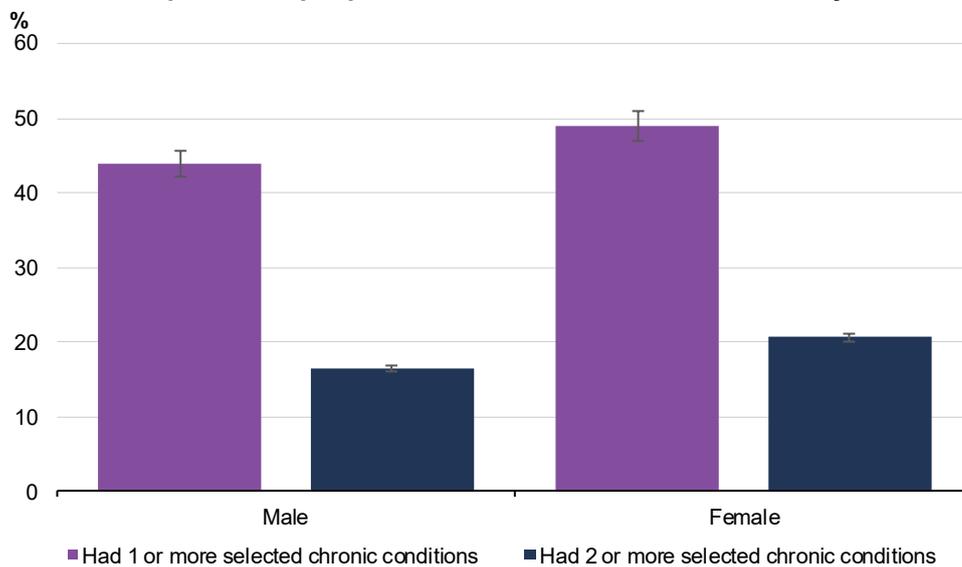
The Therapeutic Goods Administration has established a Women's Health Products Working Group to provide the Government with patient-centred, scientific and clinical advice on issues regarding women's health and regulation of therapeutic goods. Established as part of the implementation of the Therapeutic Goods Administration's *Action Plan for Medical Devices*, the Group examines issues across the product life cycle with a focus on patient perspectives and experiences, and advises on evidence use to support the safety, efficacy and quality of medicines and medical devices, in particular safety monitoring of products of importance to women. Another focus is on communication and education to ensure women feel comfortable with the medicines and medical devices being recommended for their use, acknowledging the historical male medical model and the need to ensure health care and services are tailored for the specific needs of identified populations.

The Government also utilises data assets such as the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project to link demographic data, such as Census data, to a single platform. This enables departmental and external researchers to apply a socioeconomic lens over health data and systems such as the Medicare Benefits Schedule, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and the Australian Immunisation Register.

Diseases and conditions

There is increasing recognition of the need to take sex differences into account as part of the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and conditions. Approximately 78.6 per cent of the Australian population have at least one long-term health condition. As shown in Chart 12, based on the National Health Survey 2020–21, women experience chronic health conditions at a higher rate than men, with approximately 49.0 per cent of women reporting one or more chronic conditions, compared to 43.9 per cent of men; and approximately 20.7 per cent of women reporting 2 or more chronic conditions, compared to 16.4 per cent of men.

Chart 12: Proportion of people with selected chronic conditions by sex



Source: ABS, *Health Conditions Prevalence*, 2020–21.

While we have seen improvements in the health of First Nations women and girls, it is clear that more needs to be done across many key areas including mortality, incidences of mental illness and chronic conditions, sexual health, maternal health and hospitalisations. Continued efforts are also required to address several risk factors such as tobacco use, physical inactivity, dietary behaviours, harmful alcohol and other drug consumption. Poorer outcomes in these areas can be attributed to the impacts of access to appropriate housing, education and other social determinants of health as well as intergenerational trauma, systemic racism and a lack of access to culturally safe health care services.

The following section includes gender insights into some selected diseases and conditions. More comprehensive information is available in the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030* and the *National Men's Health Strategy 2020–2030*.

A lack of understanding of gender differences in the diagnosis and treatment of conditions and diseases can have adverse impacts. For example, women experiencing heart attacks more frequently present with symptoms that are unrelated to chest pain compared with men. In Australian hospitals women receiving treatment for heart attacks are less likely to receive invasive management and revascularisation than men who present with the same risk.³² Women are also less likely to be prescribed preventative medication or be referred to cardiac rehabilitation on discharge. Six months after discharge women's major adverse cardiac event rate and mortality is higher than men even when adjusted for risk assessment. Gendered differences also change over a woman's lifetime; for instance, following menopause, women's risk of heart disease and osteoporosis increases.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has been largely undiagnosed in women and is gaining increasing awareness and public interest due to many high-profile women sharing their late diagnosis. Based on the most recent data, the prevalence of ADHD in children (aged 4–11 years old) is 10.9 per cent in boys compared with 5.4 per cent in girls. Changes in diagnostic criteria, and greater awareness of the more commonly displaying 'inattentive presentation' in women (compared to 'hyperactive-impulsive' in men), means that more women who were missed during childhood are now being diagnosed.

COVID-19

While there has been considerable focus on how COVID-19 has affected women and men differently, there is an ongoing need to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data related to the impacts of the virus. Although there had been a higher number of registered deaths for males due to COVID-19 in Australia until 31 August 2022 (5,300 males compared to 4,128 females), there are indications from emerging research, for example, that women appear at greater risk of experiencing 'long COVID' symptoms than men.

During COVID-19 lockdowns, women aged 20 to 54 had the greatest increase in rates of psychological distress, and the highest increases were for coupled women with dependent children. This is likely due to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, including additional child care and home schooling demands. Evidence indicates increased prevalence of gender-based violence and abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, more regular contact between perpetrators and victims during lockdowns saw an increase in perpetrators' use of control and coercion.

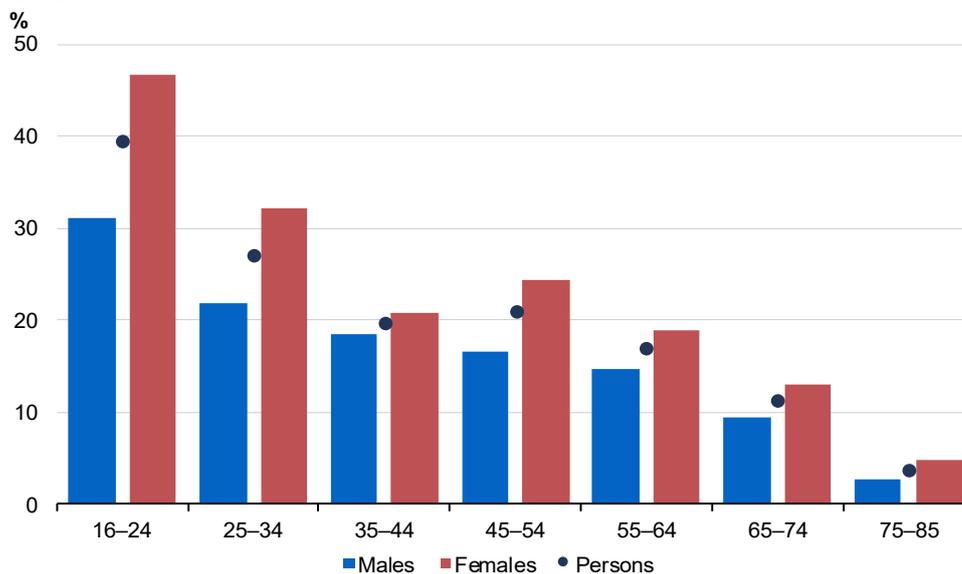
There is limited or no data available by gender in relation to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and First Nations communities. The Government is engaging with relevant organisations to obtain a greater understanding of the impacts and outcomes of COVID-19 on these communities.

³² E Khan, D Brieger, J Amerena, JJ Atherton, DP Chew, A Farshid, M Illton, CP Juergens, N Kangaharan, R Rajaratnam, A Sweeny, DL Walters and CK Chow, 'Differences in management and outcomes for men and women with ST-elevation myocardial infarction', *Medical Journal of Australia*, 2018.

Mental health

One in 5 (over 20 per cent) people of all ages experiences a mental or behavioural condition. Females are also more likely than males to have reported a mental or behavioural condition (22.8 per cent compared to 17.3 per cent) (Chart 13). There are considerable gender differences, including over the life course in relation to mental illness; understanding these differences is essential to supporting prevention, early intervention and treatment efforts. Women and men also have different lived experiences that can impact mental health, including living conditions, employment status, experiences of violence and access to services.

Chart 13: Proportion of people with any 12-month mental disorder, by age and sex



Source: ABS, *National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing*, 2020–21.

Young females have the highest prevalence of mental illness, with almost half (46.6 per cent) of females aged 16 to 24 years having a diagnosable mental disorder in the past 12 months compared to almost one third (31.2 per cent) of males in that age group. Females aged 16 to 24 also had close to double the rate of anxiety (41.3 per cent compared with 21.4 per cent) and affective disorders (19.0 per cent compared with 8.8 per cent) than males of the same age.

People who identify as LGBTIQ+ also have different mental health outcomes, with 44.7 per cent experiencing a 12-month anxiety disorder and 30 per cent having a 12-month affective disorder. In 2020–21, one in 6 (16.7 per cent) Australians aged 16 to 85 years had seriously thought about taking their own life at some point in their lives. While women are more likely than men to experience suicidal thoughts or behaviours (18.7 per cent of females and 14.5 per cent of males), men are more likely to die by suicide (18.6 per 100,000 population for men, and 5.8 per 100,000 population for women). Rates of hospitalisation for intentional self-harm are higher for women, particularly young women. From 2008–09 to 2020–21, there was a greater than 3-fold increase in the rate of intentional self-harm hospitalisations in girls aged 14 and below (increasing from 19.1 to 70.5 hospitalisations per 100,000 population). The rates for boys aged 14 and below have also slightly increased, but not to the same extent (from 4.8 to 9.4 hospitalisations per 100,000).

Certain groups are at greater risk of suicide and self-harm. Young people aged 16 to 34, for example, report the highest prevalence of suicidal thoughts or behaviours. At the same time, in 2020, women aged 45 to 49 had the highest suicide rate for women across all age groups, which may be linked to poor mental health associated with menopause.³³ Other priority populations for suicide prevention in Australia include LGBTIQ+ and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The suicide rate in First Nations people is 2 times the rate of non-Indigenous populations. In 2020, one-quarter of all deaths by suicide among First Nations people and the non-Indigenous population were women. In 2020–21, the rate of intentional self-harm hospitalisations for First Nations people was about 3 times that of non-Indigenous Australians (326 compared to 108 hospitalisations per 100,000 population). First Nations young women aged 15 to 19 recorded the highest rates of intentional self-harm hospitalisations (1,133 hospitalisations per 100,000 population).

³³ Kulkarni J, 'Perimenopausal depression – an under-recognised entity', *Australian Prescriber*, 2018.

Budget highlights: actions to support improved health outcomes

- The Government has set aside \$750.0 million over 3 years for the Strengthening Medicare Fund to provide better access and care for patients. The delivery of the Fund will be informed by the recommendations of the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce, which is scheduled to report by the end of 2022.
- From 1 September 2022, the Government listed Zejula® (niraparib) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to treat ovarian, fallopian tube or primary peritoneal cancer. Around 300 women each year could benefit from this treatment. Without the subsidy, patients would pay more than \$130,000 for a course of treatment.
- Expanding and strengthening the *headspace* network through the establishment of additional *headspace* services will see the network expand to 170 physical services. More services will increase access to vital mental health support for young people aged 12 to 25 experiencing or at risk of mental ill-health. In 2020–21, 67 per cent of young people accessing *headspace* centres identified as female or gender diverse.
- The Strengthening Medicare General Practice (GP) Grants Program will help GPs provide better care. It will provide \$229.7 million over 2 years to support GP practices, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, with up to \$50,000 to enhance digital capability, invest in infection control and meet accreditation standards.

Reproductive, sexual and maternal health

Women have specific sexual and reproductive health needs that change over their lifetime. Stigma relating to normal life events such as periods and menopause has led to these issues being under-researched and misunderstood, and potentially influence whether women seek help. A lack of access to affordable, safe and effective care, services, treatments and products poses health risks. It can also impact women's participation at school, in the workforce and in society. Policies that remove barriers to women's workforce participation – such as increased subsidies for child care – must be complemented by health settings that ensure women have reproductive health choice, autonomy and support. Barriers faced by First Nations women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, and migrant women must also be addressed.

There has been increasing recognition across Australia that period products need to be accessible and affordable to ensure girls and women do not face barriers to education and workforce participation. A survey of more than 125,000 people conducted in 2021 found that nearly half had missed at least one day of school because of their period and one in 5 had improvised, for example using toilet paper, due to the cost of pads or

tampons.³⁴ Numerous states and territories across Australia have made period products free in public schools, which will play an important role in addressing period poverty and reducing the stigma and embarrassment that often surrounds menstruation.

Endometriosis is a chronic condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus (womb) develops outside the womb and causes pain and inflammation. Endometriosis affects approximately 700,000 Australian women and girls of all ages and accounted for 34,200 hospitalisations in Australia in 2016–17. However, its causes are not well understood, and it can be difficult to diagnose. Diagnosis of endometriosis is often delayed, with an average of 7 years between onset of symptoms and diagnosis. Symptoms of endometriosis can often severely impact a person's physical and mental wellbeing, quality of life, work and social functioning. Ernst & Young modelling undertaken for EndoActive estimated that the condition cost the Australian economy an estimated \$7.4 billion in 2018–19, mostly through reduced quality of life and productivity losses.³⁵

It is estimated that around one in 5 women in Australia will have an abortion during their lifetime. The *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030* includes a specific action for universal access to sexual and reproductive health information, treatment and services that offer options to women to empower choice and control in decision-making about their bodies, including contraception and options for addressing unplanned pregnancies, such as access to termination services.

In Australia, there are over 2.5 million employed women aged between 40 and 60, many of whom would be menopausal or perimenopausal. Approximately 80 per cent of women experience menopause symptoms. It is estimated that 28 per cent of postmenopausal women will have moderate to severe symptoms that impacts their workforce participation.

Perinatal health

In 2020, 79 per cent of women who gave birth accessed antenatal care in the first trimester of their pregnancy, and 95 per cent had 5 or more antenatal care visits. The proportion of women who reported smoking at any time during pregnancy has fallen from 14 per cent in 2010 to 9.2 per cent in 2020.

Around 100,000 Australians are estimated to experience perinatal anxiety and/or depression each year, which has the potential to cause significant harm not only to parents but also their children. The 'Enhanced Perinatal Mental Health Screening' program aims to better identify people at risk of perinatal mental disorders.

³⁴ J Connory, *Period Pride Report: Bloody Big Survey Findings*, Swinburne University of Technology, 2021.

³⁵ Ernst & Young, *The cost of endometriosis in Australia: a report for EndoActive*, Ernst & Young, 2019.

In recent years, there have been some positive improvements to the health of First Nations people. For First Nations women, there has been an increase in antenatal care attendance in the first trimester (from 50 per cent in 2012 to 71 per cent in 2020), a reduction in smoking during pregnancy (from 54 per cent in 2006 to 44 per cent in 2017) and a slight increase in breast cancer screening (from 31 per cent in 1999–00 to 37 per cent in 2017–18 for First Nations women ages 50 to 69).

While this is encouraging, the Government recognises that continued and concerted efforts are required to close the gap in health outcomes for First Nations women and girls, who continue to have poorer health outcomes compared to non-Indigenous women in Australia. For example:

- First Nations mothers and their babies disproportionately experience adverse perinatal outcomes compared with non-Indigenous mothers and babies
- First Nations babies are more likely to be born of a low birthweight, premature or stillborn and First Nations mothers are more likely to die during childbirth.

The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031* (Health Plan) is driving the implementation of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (Closing the Gap) health outcomes, including ensuring everyone enjoys a long and healthy life and children are born healthy and strong. The Health Plan and Closing the Gap recognises the need for First Nations health care delivery that is holistic, self-determined, owned and driven by First Nations people, connected to Country and culturally safe.

Continuity of culturally safe perinatal care, for example, is crucial to addressing the disparities in perinatal outcomes and achieving Closing the Gap Target 2, to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent by 2031. Evidence shows that women who have access to culturally safe maternity care such as Birthing on Country approaches have improved health outcomes including increased antenatal visits, reduced likelihood of infants born preterm, and increased likelihood of women breastfeeding on discharge from hospital. Birthing on Country returns maternity services to First Nations communities and their control and enables self-determination and connection to family, culture and community throughout pregnancy and birth.

Around 100,000 Australians are estimated to experience perinatal anxiety and/or depression each year, which has the potential to cause significant harm to both parents and their children. The 'National Perinatal Mental Health Check' and 'Universal Perinatal Mental Health Screening' programs aim to better identify people at risk of perinatal mental disorders.

Budget highlights: support for reproductive and maternal health

- To support the mental health of new and expecting parents, the Government is providing \$26.2 million to fund 12 new perinatal mental health centres across Australia. This will help around 2,880 parents to access the mental health support they need each year.
- The Government is committing \$5.9 million to expand the pregnancy and post-natal care guidelines for expectant parents, including targeted consultation and guidance for culturally and linguistically diverse people and First Nations peoples. Funding of \$13.9 million is also being provided to increase the number of autopsies and investigations undertaken after a stillbirth.
- The Government is investing \$22.5 million over 3 years from 2022–23 to build a dedicated Birthing on Country Centre of Excellence in Nowra, NSW.

Care and Health Workforce

While the determinants of health outcomes are multifaceted, access to skilled and appropriate healthcare professionals and services can contribute to improved health outcomes. The health workforce comprises a wide range of different fields, including medical practitioners, nurses and midwives, allied health workers, and dental practitioners.

On average, Australia's health workforce predominantly consists of women. In 2020, for every male health professional, there were almost 3 female health professionals, with a total of 476,500 women and 166,000 men in the workforce. Nurses and midwives continue to be the largest group in the health workforce, with 434,428 nurses and midwives registered in 2021. According to the National Health Workforce Dataset, women make up around 88 per cent of the registered nursing workforce.

Occupational segregation is apparent across the health workforce. While some occupations are highly feminised – such as nurses and midwives – others are not, including medical and dental practitioners. However, it should be noted that between 2015 and 2020, the full-time equivalent rate of female medical and dental practitioners increased by 18 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

The care workforce is also highly feminised. In aged care for example women represent almost 84 per cent of residential aged care workers. A large proportion of the aged care workforce also works part time. In 2021, 66.2 per cent of aged care residential service workers were employed part time, compared to 22 per cent across all industries.

Budget highlights: supporting the care economy

- The Government understands the importance of the Care Economy and will work across government to improve the coordination, planning and employment pathways in the care workforce.
- To provide counselling and health support services to nurses and midwives, the Government is providing funding to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation to establish a National Nurse and Midwife Health Support Service.
- The Government has supported a pay rise for aged care workers through its submission on the Aged Care Work Value Case to the Fair Work Commission and will provide funding to support any resulting increases to award wages.
- The Government is putting nurses back into nursing homes by requiring a qualified registered nurse be on site in every residential aged care home 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from 1 July 2023.
- In addition, the Government is further professionalising the aged care workforce by establishing a national registration scheme for personal care workers.

Women in sport

Women continue to be under-represented in sport across participation, coaching and official ranks, and governance roles at all levels of sport. Women are more likely to be insufficiently active (59 per cent compared to 50 per cent for men) and less likely to play sport.

A 2022 survey conducted by the broadcaster Foxtel found that 66 per cent of Australians watch more women's sport on TV than in 2020. The survey also found that women's sport is gaining popularity among men, with 72 per cent of male respondents saying they watch women's sport and men making up two-thirds of the overall viewership across the Australian Football League Women's (AFLW), National Rugby League Women (NRWL) and Women's Big Bash League competitions. This change is attributed to increased media coverage.

While recognition of women's sports has risen considerably in recent years, women remain under-represented across all levels of sport particularly in senior coaching, high performance and executive positions. In Australia, only 25 per cent of national sporting organisation Chairs and only 26 per cent of national sporting organisation Chief Executive Officers are women and less than 10 per cent of coaches in Australia's high-performance system are women.

Girls and women can face challenges, which pose significant barriers to participation in the sport industry, including caring responsibilities, socio-cultural factors and lack of women role models within the industry to serve as motivators. Analysis by Plan International in 2019 that examined social media commentary of sports people in Australia, found that overall, sportswomen attracted more than 3 times the number of negative comments than sportsmen (26.9 per cent for women and 8.5 per cent for men).

Common themes included sexist, derogatory and sexualised comments.³⁶ The Government has recently announced their commitment to protecting sporting participants through Sport Integrity Australia's Safety in Sport Division. This will enable Sport Integrity Australia to play a national co-ordination role for sport integrity related matters, focusing on abuses of power such as discrimination and vilification.

The Government funds a range of existing programs intended to increase women's participation and develop leaders. This includes sports participation programs to create and expand opportunities for future leaders, increase basketball participation amongst First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and to create leadership, safety and employment opportunities via the Women's Coaches program and the Community Sport Leaders Program. This includes \$5.7 million over 2 years to implement legacy initiatives supporting women's participation for FIBA Women's World Cup 2022 and the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023. The Government also funds the Women's Leadership and Development Program contributing to the Women Leaders in Sport Program.

In August 2022, the inaugural Women in Sport Congress was held in Melbourne. It was delivered by the La Trobe Sport and Exercise Medicine Research Centre, and the Australian Institute of Sport Female Performance and Health Initiative. It brought together clinicians and practitioners to share new and novel research findings, alongside best practice management tips.

The Australian Institute of Sport has partnered with specialist medical practitioners, high performance athletes and high-performance coaches to design a suite of online learning modules for athletes, parents, coaches and medical practitioners. Modules include information on issues such as puberty and development, menstrual cycles, contraception, pelvic, breast and bone health and body image. It also includes information on performance and health considerations for coaching women athletes.

Australia has also entered a 'green and gold decade' of hosting international top-tier major sporting events, culminating in the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Hosting these events provides wide-ranging social and economic benefits to the Australian community, including the opportunity to encourage greater participation and involvement in sport and physical activity, increase gender equity, promote inclusion, and support Australian athletes to pursue sporting success on the global stage. Events - including the FIBA Women's World Cup 2022, FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, Netball World Cup 2027 and Women's Rugby World Cup 2029 - will provide a unique platform to showcase women's participation in sport at the most elite level and inspire women and girls to get involved in community sport. These events also help shift stereotypes and respect for women in sport, by demonstrating the value and importance of women's sport to the community.

³⁶ Plan International Australia, *Snapshot Analysis: Social Media Commentary of Sportswomen and Sportsmen*, Plan International Australia, 2019.