



# Budget 2022–23

## Women’s Budget Statement 2022–23

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29 March 2022

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ISBN 978-1-925832-44-0

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# Foreword

Women continue to drive Australia's economic recovery. As of February 2022, women's workforce participation reached the highest on record at 62.4 per cent, with 1.1 million more women in work today than in 2013. And the gender pay gap has narrowed to 13.8 per cent, the second-lowest on record and significantly lower than the 17.4 per cent gender pay gap when the Government was elected in 2013.

However, more needs to be done to improve respect for women, achieve gender equality and increase choice and flexibility for women and families. The 2022-23 Women's Budget Statement (the Statement) provides a \$2.1 billion investment to build on the Government's strong record of support for women and girls.

Since 2013, the Government has invested record funding in women's safety, supported new and expanded women's health and wellbeing initiatives, made child care more affordable and flexible for families, overseen a record number of women in work, and invested in women's leadership and career pathways.

The Cabinet Taskforce for Women's Safety and Economic Security continues to bring together key ministers, including all women in the Ministry, to apply their expertise and share the experiences of their communities, to better inform, coordinate, and address critical issues facing women in Australia. This Statement is a reflection of this continued collaboration.

This Statement builds on the Government's \$3.4 billion investment in women made in 2021-22, bringing total funding to \$5.5 billion, with a continued focus on our three priorities of women's safety, women's economic security and leadership, and women's health and wellbeing. We know that these three priorities are mutually reinforcing – when we achieve better outcomes in one area, we see positive benefits across all areas, as well as for the economy and society as a whole.

This Statement also provides \$40.4 million in new investment specifically directed to women's leadership. When women are in leadership positions, their talents and skills benefit our entire community and our economy. Having women in visible leadership positions also inspires the next generation of young girls to step up and lead our country into the future. As of December 2021, women held more than half of Australian Government board seats. We set the target in 2016 and we have exceeded it.

The 2021 National Summit on Women's Safety was a significant gathering of people – Australians with lived experience, practitioners, policymakers, business leaders and researchers – all coming together to inform the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. We thank everyone for their contributions to the various consultation processes and tireless efforts to end the scourge of domestic, family and sexual violence that affects all Australian communities.

The Morrison Government is committed to working with all jurisdictions to end violence against women and children. Through this Statement, we are making a further investment of \$1.3 billion to deliver targeted measures towards implementation of the new National Plan. Our investment focuses on a range of areas from prevention through to frontline services and women's safety at work. Our investment is built around the four pillars of the National Plan – prevention, early intervention, response and recovery. It also acknowledges and takes into account the diverse experiences of women affected by family and domestic violence. This investment builds on the \$1.1 billion provided in the 2021-22 Women's Budget Statement.

The Government remains committed to boosting women's economic security. Women's participation in the workforce is an economic and social priority. Boosting women's workforce participation is essential to supporting economic growth and raising living standards.

The Government has overseen continued improvements in women's workforce participation, and is committed to further narrowing the gender pay gap and the gender superannuation gaps by continuing to support increased participation. This Budget invests \$441.6 million in new and expanded initiatives to increase women's workforce participation, reduce barriers to women working in the paid workforce, and offers additional assistance to women to build a financially secure future. At the heart of this investment are changes to enhance Australia's Paid Parental Leave scheme. These changes demonstrate the Government's commitment to equality of opportunity, increased choice and flexibility for families, and to further supporting women's workforce participation and establishing more equitable care arrangements between parents.

The Government is also investing in women's health at every life stage. Through this Statement, the Government is making a \$330.6 million investment to address persistent and new health and mental health challenges. We will deliver a suite of initiatives covering maternal, sexual and reproductive health (including endometriosis), preventive health, and mental health. Supporting all women and girls to achieve the best health outcomes possible will benefit not only women themselves, but also their families, communities, and our whole country.

The 2022-23 Budget demonstrates the Government's continued commitment and action to achieving greater gender equality in Australia, and puts women at the centre of the economic and social recovery.

The Honourable Scott Morrison  
Prime Minister of Australia

Senator the Honourable Marise Payne  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Women

# WOMEN'S BUDGET STATEMENT 2022-23

## Overview

The 2022-23 Women's Budget Statement reflects the Government's ongoing focus on key issues that impact the nearly 13 million women and girls in Australia. It recognises the different experiences and outcomes that women and girls face in relation to their safety, economic security and health and wellbeing. This work is overseen by the Cabinet Taskforce on Women's Safety and Economic Security, which was established in 2021, and which continues to drive and respond to key issues involving women's equality, including shaping new initiatives in this Statement. This Statement builds on last year's statement and reaffirms the Government's commitment to an Australia:

- where women and children are free from violence
- where women and families have the flexibility to make the choices that are right for them
- where women's workforce participation continues to increase and the gender pay gap continues to narrow
- that supports women into leadership positions
- that recognises and responds to the different health needs of women and girls, and
- that is inclusive of the diversity of women's lived experiences.

### The 2022-23 Budget

The Australian community and economy have displayed remarkable resilience in the face of recent challenges. The women's workforce participation rate is at a record high of 62.4 per cent, with more women in better paying jobs than ever before. Women's workforce participation is contributing to Australia's strong economic performance. The economic plan outlined in this year's Budget – in conjunction with a further investment of \$2.1 billion for measures targeted at women outlined in this Statement – will further improve outcomes and increase opportunities for women. This will deliver an even stronger and more productive economy.

### Women's safety

There is an ongoing need to work together to end all forms of violence against women and children. Rates of violence remain unacceptably high. A sustained, collaborative, national effort is needed to address the drivers of this violence so that women are safe at home, at school and work, online and in the community.

Building on the \$1.1 billion investment in women's safety announced in the last Budget, the Government is investing a further \$1.3 billion to drive change under the next *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (next National Plan). Funding in this Budget is based on the four pillars of the next National Plan: prevention, early intervention, response and recovery. As part of these efforts, and announced in November 2021, the Commonwealth Government is providing national leadership by investing \$22.4 million for the establishment of a Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission to ensure national coordination and collaboration. The Government is also developing a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, which is being led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence.

The next National Plan, and the Government's investment to support it, is based on over 18 months of consultation, including through the 2021 National Summit on Women's Safety and three public consultation processes. This consultation has enabled feedback from a diverse range of voices, and importantly, from women with lived experience of violence. It reflects the need to not only invest in preventing, intervening and responding to violence, but also to support victim-survivors' journey towards recovery.

### **Women's economic security**

Women's economic security is an economic and social priority for Australia. The Government is continuing to provide greater choice and flexibility to improve women's workforce participation, increase their earnings and progress their careers.

The women's workforce participation is now at its highest level, and women's unemployment is at its lowest level since 1974. Australia has surpassed its 2014 G20 target to reduce the workforce participation gap between women and men by 25 per cent by 2025 and the gender pay gap has fallen from 17.4 per cent in 2013 to 13.8 per cent in November 2021. There are more women in highly skilled jobs than ever before. Women are also taking up more leadership positions. Notably, women now hold a record 50.2 per cent of Australian Government board positions and 34.2 per cent of ASX200 company board positions. This compares to 41.7 per cent of women on Australian Government board positions in 2013.

Despite this progress, there are a range of barriers to women's workforce participation. This means women, on average, earn and save less than men throughout their lifetime and are at greater risk of financial stress and hardship. This Statement invests \$482.0 million in women's economic security measures to address a range of these barriers and drivers of the gender pay gap. These include measures to increase flexibility and choice for women and families to manage work and care, support women's workforce participation in more diverse jobs and create new leadership pathways for women.

To further remove barriers to women's workforce participation and provide working families with maximum choice and flexibility to manage work and care, the Government is establishing Enhanced Paid Parental Leave for Families. Eligible working parents will be able to share up to 20 weeks of fully flexible entitlements between them. Further funding is also being provided to increase access to child care services in regional and remote locations, which builds on the \$1.7 billion investment in the 2021-22 Budget to make child care even more affordable. The Government is investing in new and existing initiatives to enable more women to move into jobs of the future, including in male-dominated industries and occupations, as well as into leadership positions.

### **Women's health and wellbeing**

The *National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030* continues to guide investments in the health and wellbeing of women and girls in Australia. In the 2022-23 Budget, the Government is making a \$330.6 million investment in key pillars of the Strategy, building on the \$535 million in funding for women's health in the 2021-22 Budget. Key investments include funding to support women experiencing endometriosis and pelvic pain and to establish a National Women's Health Advisory Council to monitor and report on implementation of the Health Strategy.

## Women's safety

The Government is committed to an Australia that is free from violence against women and children, and where women are safe and respected, including in the workplace. There has been increasing awareness and understanding of family, domestic and sexual violence in recent years, but rates of violence against women and children remain unacceptably high.

The 2022-23 Budget commits a further \$1.3 billion to drive change under the next *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (next National Plan), which builds on the \$1.1 billion provided in the 2021-22 Budget.

The next National Plan will set out all Australian governments' collective commitment to ending violence against women and children. It will provide a national blueprint for change, reflecting our collective goals, priorities and the targets for how we will work towards ending violence over the next 10 years. To support the next National Plan, currently being finalised to commence in mid-2022, measures in this Budget provide practical actions to prevent violence, and to assist women to live free from violence, to heal and to recover. These measures contribute to the Commonwealth's investment under the first five-year Action Plan 2022-2027 of the next National Plan.

For the first time, a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan is being developed, led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence. Funding for existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services has been extended in this Budget to ensure continuity of support while the Action Plan is being finalised.

As outlined in the Government's *A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces* (Roadmap for Respect), tackling sexual harassment is central to advancing both women's safety and economic security. The Government has zero tolerance for sexual harassment. Measures in this Budget will further implement the Roadmap for Respect and support women who experience sexual harassment at work. Work is underway to implement the Government's response to all recommendations in the Respect@Work report. The Government has already fully implemented or fully funded 42 of the 55 recommendations, with over \$66.5 million committed to implementation to date.

## Violence against women and children

Family, domestic and sexual violence disproportionately impacts women and children.<sup>1</sup>

- On average, one woman is killed by a partner every 11 days.<sup>2</sup>
- One in four women have experienced violence by a current or former intimate partner since the age of 15.<sup>3</sup>
- Indigenous women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-Indigenous women.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2018, the rate of police-recorded sexual assaults was almost seven times higher for women (154 per 100,000) compared to men (24 per 100,000).<sup>5</sup>
- 77 per cent of cases of intimate partner homicides involve a male offender killing a current or former female partner. Of the remaining cases, the female homicide offender was the primary domestic violence victim in 71 per cent of cases.<sup>6</sup>
- Of women who have experienced violence from a previous partner and had children in their care when the violence occurred, 68 per cent reported that children had seen or heard the violence.<sup>7</sup>

Violence against women and children may take many forms, and there is an increasing understanding and awareness that violence can be both physical and non-physical. There is also increasing understanding of new and emerging forms of violence against women, including coercive control, financial abuse and technology-facilitated abuse. This violence is driven by, and is a symptom of, gender inequality.<sup>8</sup>

These statistics are unacceptable. It will take time for prevention efforts to create the generational changes that lead to an Australia free from violence against women and children. Measuring this change is complex, however there are signs that efforts to date, particularly in relation to changing attitudes towards violence, are having an impact. For example, the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women

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1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2016) *Personal Safety Survey*

2 Australian Institute of Criminology (2021) *Homicide in Australia 2018-19: Statistical Report no.34*

3 ABS (2016) *Personal Safety Survey*

4 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2019) *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia: continuing the national story*

5 AIHW (2020) *Sexual assault in Australia*

6 Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & ANROWS (2022) *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network Data Report: Intimate partner violence homicides 2010–2018*

7 AIHW (2022) *Web report – Australia's Children: Children exposed to family violence*

8 Our Watch (2021) *Change the Story: Second Edition*

Survey showed that an increasing number of people do not support or excuse violence against women and are supportive of gender equality.<sup>9</sup>

## Impacts of COVID-19

As outlined in last year's Women's Budget Statement, for too many women COVID-19 saw the onset or escalation of violence and abuse. Police records show family and domestic violence related sexual assault increased by 13 per cent in 2020, which is considerably higher than the two per cent increase reported between 2018 and 2019.<sup>10</sup>

Research by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) indicates a relationship between economic hardship – such as not being able to pay bills – and the onset of intimate partner violence during COVID-19. Intimate partner violence was also more likely in relationships where financial precarity was experienced by one partner and not the other, highlighting the role of economic disparity in violence, as well as the link between violence and economic security.<sup>11</sup>

In response to the considerable impacts of COVID-19, the Government committed up to \$261.4 million over two years in the 2021-22 Budget in temporary, targeted and proportionate support through the National Partnership on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses. This funding was provided to assist states and territories to bolster frontline support services in response to the considerable impacts of COVID-19.

The first payment under the National Partnership has been provided to states and territories to ensure women and children can access support when they need it, including accommodation and legal support services. This funding also builds on the Government's \$130 million National Partnership on COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Responses, which was rolled out in 2020 and supported 655 organisations across the country (as at 31 January 2022).

## The next National Plan

Since 2010, efforts to reduce violence against women have been guided by the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. It has been supported by the Commonwealth, states and territories through four, three-year Action Plans. The Government has provided significant funding to support the current plan, including \$340 million in 2018-19 for the Fourth Action Plan. In the 2021-22 Budget, the

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9 National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS) (2017) *Summary findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey*

10 ABS (2021) *Recorded Crime – Victims 2020*

11 ANROWS (2022) *Economic insecurity and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Australian during the COVID-19 pandemic*

Government invested a further \$1.1 billion for a range of measures to enable a smooth transition to the next National Plan.

The development of the next National Plan has been informed by over 18 months of consultation with advocates, victim-survivors, service providers, researchers and others. People with lived experience of violence have made important contributions through a range of public consultation activities, including: the 2021 National Summit on Women's Safety; surveys, targeted workshops and interviews; and public comments on the draft of the next National Plan. The next National Plan is also being informed and guided by:

- the recommendations of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs' inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence, which reported on 1 April 2021
- expert advice from the National Plan Advisory Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence.

Following agreement to the next National Plan, all jurisdictions will outline how they are taking practical actions to support it, through two five-year Action Plans and two five-year dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plans. The measures in this Budget form part of the Commonwealth's contribution to the first Action Plan.

All jurisdictions have agreed that the next National Plan will include the four pillars of: prevention, early intervention, response and recovery. These pillars help focus all Governments' efforts over the next decade, and set a framework for measuring outcomes. The pillars are interconnected, with each one reinforcing the effectiveness of the others. They reflect an increased understanding that interventions are required across the life course, to create generational change while also supporting the many women and children who are impacted by violence.

### **Box 1: 2021 National Summit on Women's Safety**

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions being in place, the 2021 National Summit on Women's Safety (the Summit) was delivered virtually with roundtables held on 2 and 3 September and panel sessions and keynote speakers on 6 and 7 September 2021.

As the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, expressed in his opening address, the Summit brought together a diverse range of participants with a shared ambition to see an end to violence against women and children, through development of the next National Plan. This commitment involves recognition that the next National Plan must build on previous efforts, and must not only prevent, intervene, and provide support in times of crisis, but also support recovery, and must assist victim-survivors to rebuild their lives.

The Summit provided a national platform for issues affecting women's safety and focused collective attention towards solutions. Summit outcomes were captured in a final Statement from delegates that was presented to Commonwealth, state and territory ministers at the conclusion of the Summit. Delegates emphasised that equality and respect are the basis for prevention of violence against women and children.

The Summit was one element of the extensive consultation process that has been underway for over 18 months to inform the development of the next National Plan.

### **National leadership**

The next National Plan will commit to 10 years of ambitious and sustained action and calls for partnership across sectors and all levels of government. The Government recognises that the next National Plan should be underpinned by:

- greater coordination and transparency across jurisdictions
- a collaborative approach to policy and research
- clear accountability across all sectors and governments.

To deliver on this ambition, in November 2021 the Government announced it will invest \$22.4 million over five years to establish a National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission to monitor and oversee the implementation of the next National Plan.

Commencing in July 2022, the Commission will support the Government by providing policy leadership, fostering relationships across the sector and governments, and embedding a coordinated and cooperative approach to ending violence. It will monitor accountability and evaluation frameworks and will play a vital role in bringing together data from the Commonwealth, states and territories, local governments and the service sector to better measure the prevalence of family, domestic and sexual violence as well as the support provided to respond to it.

## Prevention

Violence against women and children is preventable. To stop violence before it starts, the Government is taking a key role in leading work on primary prevention. Primary prevention seeks to change the attitudes and behaviours that can excuse, justify or even promote violence against women and children, as well as addressing gender inequality. Achieving long-term change requires action across all settings: where people live, learn, work, play, and in the community.

To support the current National Plan, the Government has already made significant investments in primary prevention initiatives, including more than \$68 million of the \$340 million for the Fourth Action Plan, \$55 million for the National Stop it at the Start Campaign since 2015, and \$28.8 million from 2019-20 to 2021-22 to support Our Watch, the national leader of primary prevention efforts.

Early conversations with young people about consent are crucial to preventing violence against women, particularly sexual violence. Almost nine in 10 Australians agree 'adults should talk to young people more about the topic of consent' but almost half of Australians are confused about the issue, which leads them to avoid the problem.<sup>12</sup> The Government is committed to ensuring that messages about consent are heard in every home in Australia. This Budget includes funding that will continue to improve and amplify how young people learn about safe and respectful relationships.

### New initiatives

The Commonwealth is leading the way in prevention, providing a further investment of \$203.6 million over six years, to continue efforts to stop violence before it begins.

New funding of \$104.4 million over five years will **support the leading primary prevention organisation Our Watch**, representing about a 65 per cent increase on annualised funding, so it can continue its important work. This funding will enable Our Watch to boost its efforts in prevention for LGBTIQ+ people, women

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12 Kantar Public (2022) *Reducing Sexual Violence – research informing the development of a national campaign*

with disability and migrant women, and develop further resources to educate young people about consent.

Recognising the importance of addressing consent and supporting respectful relationships, the Government is investing:

- \$46.0 million over four years to **deliver phase five and six of the Stop it at the Start campaign** which will continue to drive population level change in people's attitudes towards violence
- \$32.2 million over five years for a **consent campaign focusing on young people aged 12 and older and their parents**, building on the \$10.7 million already allocated in the 2021-22 Budget for this campaign
- \$5.0 million over two years to **conduct a national survey of secondary school-age students' understanding of consent**, with results to further inform the Government's work on respectful relationships and national prevention strategies
- \$6.0 million over four years to update the Commonwealth's respectful relationships education online platform in line with the new Australian curriculum and based on expert advice.

Additional funding of \$9.0 million in 2022-23 is being provided to **continue a range of community-based prevention activities**, including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) integrated referral programs, support pathways for women with disability experiencing violence, and supporting men as new parents.

The Government will strengthen efforts to prevent and respond to forced marriage of women and girls, including by updating the 'My Blue Sky' website, Australia's national online hub dedicated to forced marriage prevention and support.

The Government is also committing an additional \$1.0 million to establish consultation mechanisms with victim-survivors to ensure their experiences inform implementation of the next National Plan.

## Early intervention

Early interventions stop violence from escalating, protect women and children from harm and prevent violence from reoccurring. Early intervention efforts seek to identify and support people at high risk of either experiencing violence or perpetrating violence, including children who have witnessed violence.

This can include support for frontline workers to respond early to signs that someone is experiencing or at risk of family and domestic violence. It can also include programs and policies targeted at perpetrators, including support to stop the escalation of violence.

The Government is already funding a range of early intervention initiatives.

- \$4.1m over three years in the 2021-22 Budget for the Coordinated Enforcement and Support to Eliminate (CEASE) Domestic Violence Program trial. The CEASE trial which began in November 2021, aims to deter perpetrators from reoffending through overt monitoring and clear consequences for further offending.
- \$4.8 million over three years from 2019-20 for No to Violence's National Perpetrator Intervention and Referral Service, which from 1 July to 31 December 2021, the service assisted 3,984 clients through the Men's Referral Service, as well as training for over 290 frontline workers who work with men who use violent and/or controlling behaviour.

### **New initiatives**

The Commonwealth is providing \$328.2 million over five years for a range of activities and services to intervene early and support victim-survivors, as well as to help people who use violence to choose to change their behaviour.

Funding of \$100.0 million over five years is being provided for **trauma-informed counselling services to support victim-survivors and families who are experiencing, witnessing or at risk of family or domestic violence**, including a focus on supporting children impacted by family and domestic violence. This may include behaviour change services for individuals who have or are at risk of perpetrating gendered violence.

Funding of \$27.8 million over five years will **extend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family safety services**. This will provide funding for up to 18 existing providers currently funded under the Third and Fourth Action Plans.

To support small-scale grants to trial and test innovative approaches to addressing family, domestic and sexual violence, **\$15.2 million over five years is being provided to a Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) support fund**. The FDSV fund will enable the Government to respond to emerging issues over the course of the first Action Plan of the next National Plan.

The Government is providing funding to improve training to enable service providers to better recognise and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence.

- \$39.7 million over five years **to extend DV-alert training**, which supports non-specialist frontline workers to recognise, respond and refer women

experiencing or at risk of family, domestic and sexual violence. This builds on the over \$66 million provided to Lifeline over the life of the current National Plan. It is anticipated DV-alert training will be accessed by around 7,000 people a year.

- \$14.8 million over five years **will be provided for accredited sexual and family violence response training** for community frontline workers, health professionals, and the justice sector.
- \$4.1 million over five years to **deliver national training for law enforcement** across Australia to effectively identify and support victim-survivors of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence. Training will seek to uplift policing responses across five dedicated streams including coercive control, sexual assault, technology facilitated abuse, child safety, and targeting attitudes and behaviours towards family, domestic and sexual violence.

The eSafety Commissioner will receive \$10.0 million over five years to deliver **community grants for online safety education** and support projects for organisations including community groups, sporting clubs and faith groups.

A further \$5.0 million over five years will **extend the National Online Safety Awareness Campaign**. Funding of \$16.6 million over four years is also provided to **establish a new telephone service to provide support for women and children experiencing technology-facilitated abuse**. This service will deliver practical advice and support for women and children experiencing technology facilitated abuse, and for the frontline workers supporting them, by working in partnership to receive referrals from existing domestic and family violence support services.

Significant funding is also being provided to educate men who use violence to be aware of and change their behaviour, including:

- \$47.9 million over five years for a **new campaign that focuses on confronting the attitudes and expectations of some men which can condone or excuse violence**
- \$10.5 million over five years to **enable No to Violence to continue national coverage for the Men's Referral Service**, a direct telephone and online support for men who use violent and controlling behaviour, and the Brief Intervention Service, telephone-based counselling for men who use violence.

Children are deeply affected by family and domestic violence. Recognising the impact violence can have on their long-term wellbeing, the Government is investing in a range of measures to support children.

- \$30.0 million over five years for a **package of measures to keep children safe**, including a new National Child and Family Investment Strategy; the provision

of increased support for parents and carers including through targeted communications and supports to improve parenting practices; specific support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families through a Centre for Excellence; and a National Advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

- \$6.7 million over five years for the **Helping Children Heal program**, a pilot program of trauma-informed services for mothers and children aged 6-12 years. A specialist provider will design, develop and deliver therapeutic services via a multi-disciplinary team to support children who are struggling to reach developmental, social and educational milestones due to the impacts of family and domestic violence.

## Response

Responding to violence against women and children requires a range of different approaches. Victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence must have access to immediate help when they need it, which can include frontline support, housing, justice and family law responses. It is critical that responses take into account the diverse needs of different people and that support is provided without re-traumatising them. Responding to violence also means strengthening measures that hold perpetrators of violence to account and reducing the reoccurrence of violence.

The Government is already funding a range of response initiatives, including:

- \$164.8 million over three years for financial assistance and support for women affected by family and domestic violence. This includes the establishment of a two-year Escaping Violence Payment trial, to provide immediate financial assistance to women leaving a violent relationship. As at 28 February 2022, over 2,500 individuals have received support through the program.
- \$4.7 million over two years to support the Government to lead discussions with states and territories to develop a five-year national work plan to strengthen and enhance how Australia's criminal justice systems respond to sexual assault. As part of this, the Government has been working with states and territories on the design of National Principles to Address Coercive Control.

Access to safe accommodation is fundamental to the immediate safety of women and children experiencing violence. Since 2015, the Government has provided \$34.6 million in funding to states and territories for the initiative, which supports victim-survivors to stay in their own home – where it is safe and appropriate – by improving home security arrangements. Since its commencement in 2015-16 and as at 30 June 2021, the program has assisted nearly 14,000 women and their children nationally.

Funding has also been provided through the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation program, which delivers new or expanded emergency and crisis accommodation facilities for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence. These projects are expected to provide around 780 new safe places, supporting up to 6,340 women and children escaping violence each year.

**Box 2: 1800RESPECT**

1800RESPECT is the national online and telephone counselling and support service for people affected by family, domestic and sexual violence, including family and friends and frontline workers. It provides support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During the 2020-21 financial year, 1800RESPECT responded to more than 286,000 phone and online contacts.

The Government has made a long-term funding commitment of \$200 million for 1800RESPECT over the next five years. The 2021-22 Budget also provided funding to promote 1800RESPECT to people affected by workplace sexual harassment, in line with Recommendation 54 of the Respect@Work report.

On 24 January 2022, the Government announced Telstra Health will deliver 1800RESPECT over the next five years, following an extensive open and competitive procurement process.

**New initiatives**

To ensure victim-survivors receive appropriate support and access to justice, this Budget includes \$480.1 million over six years for a range of response measures.

The Government is committed to providing safe and secure housing for women who leave violent relationships, and this Budget provides the following new funding.

- \$100.0 million over five years to **continue the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation program**, to support the building, renovation or purchase of emergency accommodation for women and children escaping family and domestic violence. This will fund around 720 new safe places for women and children, bringing the total number of safe places to around 1,500 when completed.
- \$54.6 million over five years to **support up to 30,000 victim-survivors to stay safe in their own homes** through security assessments and upgrades including cameras, bug sweeps and safe phones. This approach supports greater housing stability by providing women an alternative to emergency accommodation and improves wellbeing by maintaining connections to the local community, networks and regular places of education and employment.

A further \$240.0 million has been committed to **extend the Escaping Violence Payment for a further three years**. The payment provides up to \$5,000 in financial assistance to establish a life free from violence and the funding is estimated to support an additional 37,500 victim-survivors on a demand driven basis. To meet demand for the current trial of the Escaping Violence Payment, the Government is providing \$40.0 million for the trial in 2021-22, enabling support for an anticipated additional 6,600 individuals.

Recognising the specific needs of the Northern Territory, \$10.7 million is being provided to **bolster frontline family, domestic and sexual violence services in the Northern Territory** to help address increased demand for services during COVID-19 and work towards Closing the Gap commitments.

To extend and enhance support for victims of human trafficking, the Commonwealth is providing \$8.0 million over five years for the **Support for Trafficked People Program**.

As sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence, funding is being provided to support women who experience harassment.

- \$1.8 million over three years to **provide information, advice and assistance to women who experience workplace issues**, including sexual harassment. This funding will be provided through a grant opportunity made available to

the Northern Territory and Queensland working women's centres, and further supports implementation of the Roadmap for Respect.

- \$1.6 million over two years to establish a **dedicated industry outreach and support team** in the Australian Human Rights Commission to assist industry to respond to and support people who may wish to come forward with historical complaints of sexual harassment.
- To improve the safety of victim-survivors, the Government is investing \$20.0 million over five years to establish a **fund for states and territories to trial electronic monitoring of high-risk and persistent family and domestic violence offenders**.

The Government is committing \$3.3 million over four years to **increase the capacity of the criminal justice system to better respond to the needs of women experiencing violence**, and promote a consistent response to gender-based violence. This will include:

- a review of national domestic violence order frameworks to ensure reflect the complex nature of domestic and family violence
- a dedicated scoping study to strengthen vulnerable witness intermediaries schemes
- support for the development of an alternative reporting mechanism for sexual assault, to better meet the justice needs of survivors and reduce the risk of re-traumatisation.

## Recovery

Recovery efforts are critical to supporting victim-survivors' long-term wellbeing. Family and domestic violence can have physical, financial, social and/or psychological impacts and recovery can be difficult and long. Strength and resilience is needed, and recovery will, in many cases, require support through dedicated and tailored services and interventions to enable women to work through their trauma sooner, guided by their own goals.

Some people can also experience compounding traumas when violence is experienced alongside other forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Recovery efforts must recognise these compounding forms of trauma to ensure women and children are supported beyond the immediate crisis response stage. This is crucial across services – it is vital that justice and health responses do not add to trauma, and instead support victim-survivors in their recovery journey.

Women's recovery is not just supported by the Government's focussed efforts under the next National Plan, but through funding in this Budget for access to better health,

increased choice, and greater financial independence. To support women and children to recover from violence, the Government has already made a number of investments:

- \$101.4 million over four years in the 2021-22 Budget to increase access to Children's Contact Services for families across Australia who are unable to safely manage arrangements themselves for the contact and changeover of their children
- \$3.7 million over four years in the 2021-22 Budget to strengthen disaster relief and recovery responses for women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.

### **New initiatives**

In this Budget the Government is continuing to take a leadership role by investing \$290.9 million over five years in recovery measures, to ensure victim-survivors are able to rebuild their lives, participate in their workplace and community, and obtain financial independence and economic security.

The Government is committed to improving the family law and justice systems through investments.

- \$87.9 million over four years to **assist families to resolve their family law matters in a more timely way and improve the safety and accessibility of the family law system**. This will be achieved through continuing and expanding the family safety risk screening and specialised case management pilot known as the Lighthouse Project, as well as enhance culturally responsive support for First Nations Australians.
- \$52.4 million over four years to **protect victim-survivors against cross-examination by family violence perpetrators**.
- \$8.4 million over three years for a **pilot of a new service delivery model to provide survivors of sexual assault with greater access to dedicated legal services** to support their recovery and engagement with the criminal justice system.
- \$1.2 million over four years for a **grant to the not-for-profit Court Network to support the roll-out of Court Network volunteers** operating at the Federal Circuit and Family Court.

The Commonwealth is providing \$48.7 million over four years **to support victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence and child sex abuse to navigate the health system**. This funding will expand the existing Family and Domestic Violence Primary Health Network pilot and establish a pilot in each state and territory to prevent and respond to child sex abuse; to provide increased support to primary care providers to assist in the early identification and

intervention of family, domestic and sexual violence and child sex abuse, and provide coordinated referrals to support services.

To support women to recover and heal from family, domestic and sexual violence, the Commonwealth is investing in trauma-informed services, including:

- \$67.2 million over four years to **pilot a new model of care, delivered through Primary Health Networks, for improved coordination and access to trauma-informed recovery services** for people who have experienced family, domestic or sexual violence
- \$25.0 million over five years for the Illawarra Women's Health Centre to support the **establishment of a women's trauma recovery centre**.

### **Supporting women experiencing violence and their diverse lived experiences**

Some groups of women experience higher rates of family, domestic and sexual violence, or are at greater risk of certain types of violence. People can be affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage at the same time. Race, sex, gender, sexual identity, disability, religion, age and class can exacerbate or increase the prevalence or severity of violence. Perpetrators may also use forms of violence that exploit other forms of discrimination and disadvantage a woman may be experiencing.

The Government is committed to understanding and responding to this diversity, to ensure all women have the opportunity to be safe and equal. All jurisdictions have agreed that an understanding of the unique and specific challenges diverse communities face in relation to family, domestic and sexual violence will be embedded in the next National Plan.

### **Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children**

Through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement), the Government has committed to listening to and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, girls, families and communities carry a wealth of inherited, lived and learnt expertise and understand what is required to see their children thrive and their communities safe.

Target 13 of the National Agreement calls for the reduction in the rates of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children by at least 50 per cent by 2031 and will be implemented through the next National Plan.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience violence at a disproportionately high rate. Indigenous women are 34 times more likely to be

hospitalised due to family violence than non-Indigenous women.<sup>13</sup> Compounding or intersectional impacts can increase the risk of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Project reiterated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls are highly capable, resilient, intelligent and courageous. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council has been established, which is working to develop a new standalone Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to underpin the next National Plan. Funding for this Action Plan will be allocated based on advice from the Advisory Council, who are working with communities to develop culturally-appropriate and place-based proposals.

Through the 2021-22 Budget, the Government is delivering \$62.8 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific measures, including \$31.6 million for the Indigenous Personal Safety Survey and \$3.17 million to build culturally appropriate crisis housing under the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Additional Funding measure.

The Government has announced it is providing additional funding of \$2.8 million over three years to deliver the final stage of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Project. This will include a national summit chaired by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO that will focus on women's leadership and decision making. On 22 February 2022, the Government also announced \$6 million to undertake an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Escaping Violence Payment place-based trial in Cairns, Queensland. The trial will be delivered by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisation.

### **Supporting women with disability**

More than two million women and girls with disability live in Australia, making up almost 18 per cent of the population of women.<sup>14</sup>

Women living with disability are nearly twice as likely as women without disability to have experienced violence by a partner.<sup>15</sup> Around 90 per cent of women with intellectual disability have experienced sexual abuse, and 68 per cent of women with an intellectual disability have been subjected to sexual abuse before they reach 18 years of age.<sup>16</sup> In addition, disability can also be acquired as a result of domestic and family violence, particularly acquired brain injuries.<sup>17</sup> Responses must be inclusive of women and girls

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13 AIHW (2019) *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia: continuing the national story*

14 AIHW (2020) Web report – People with Disability in Australia

15 ABS (2021) Women with disability at increased risk of violence

16 Australian Law Reform Commission (2010) *Family Violence – A National Legal Response*

17 Liu, L.Y., Bush, W.S., Koyutürk, M. et al. (2020) *Interplay between traumatic brain injury and intimate partner violence: data driven analysis utilizing electronic health records*

with disability, including acknowledgement of the unique types of violence and the settings in which it can be experienced.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the Government committed \$9.3 million to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls with disability. This funding is supporting the development of resources to reduce violence against women and girls with disability, and improve service responses when violence occurs.

### **Women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities**

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities can also experience complex forms of violence, as well as significant challenges in finding culturally appropriate and accessible support services. Women from migrant and refugee backgrounds can also be less likely to report violence due to language barriers, cultural stigma, concerns about visa and residency status, and financial insecurity. Women on temporary visas also reported proportionately higher levels of family and domestic violence, including controlling behaviours.<sup>18</sup>

The Government has provided \$20.3 million in funding to provide direct support to women on temporary visas experiencing violence. This provides up to \$3,000 per person/family to cover expenses such as accommodation and medical care. This funding included \$7 million over two years for nine Women's and Community Legal Services nationally, to help women access legal assistance and migration support, with the remaining funding used for an evaluation. Since the pilot commenced in April 2021, the Australian Red Cross has provided support to more than 1,000 individuals and their families.

### **LGBTIQA+ people who experience gender-based violence**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer or questioning, and asexual community (LGBTIQA+) people report similar, or possibly higher, rates of intimate partner and sexual violence than heterosexual people.<sup>19</sup> There is considerable crossover between the drivers of violence against LGBTIQA+ communities and the drivers of violence against women. LGBTIQA+ people also experience unique forms of abuse related to their sexuality and may struggle to access safe and appropriate services when they experience violence.<sup>20</sup>

There is a lack of data in relation to LGBTIQA+ peoples' experiences of family and domestic violence, and more research, evidence, knowledge and awareness is needed.

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18 Segrave, M. Wickes, R, and Keel, C. (2021) *Migrant and Refugee Women in Australia: The Safety and Security Survey*. Monash University.

19 Australian Institute of Family Studies (2015) *Intimate partner violence in lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer communities: Key issues*

20 ANROWS (2020). *Developing LGBTQ programs for perpetrators and victims/survivors of domestic and family violence*

In 2019, the Government invested \$3.3 million under the Fourth Action Plan to prevent violence against LGBTIQ+ Australians.

Measures in this Budget, across all pillars, will support all women, with some measures providing targeted support for women and children who are particularly at risk or experience unique forms of violence. There are a number of initiatives funded in this Budget that will particularly benefit women with diverse lived experiences:

- funding of \$10.7 million under the National Partnership Agreement to bolster frontline family, domestic and sexual violence services in the Northern Territory will support commitments towards Closing the Gap
- funding of \$27.8 million over two years will extend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family safety services, and provide funding for up to 18 existing providers currently funded under the Third and Fourth Action Plans
- funding of \$9 million in 2022-23 to continue a range of community-based prevention activities, including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) integrated referral programs, support pathways for women with disability experiencing violence, and supporting men as new parents
- \$104 million over five years for Our Watch will boost its efforts in prevention for LGBTIQ+ people, women with disability, and migrant women
- \$100 million for National Counselling Services will include opportunity to work with Aboriginal Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services to provide culturally appropriate and trauma-informed support.

### **Building a strong evidence base**

To effectively address the root causes of violence against women robust data and evidence is required. The Commonwealth, state and territory agencies and key data and research organisations are developing an evaluation framework for the next National Plan. Funding of \$48.9 million was provided in the 2021-22 Budget to support this important work and further bolster the evidence base.

This work is led by the Department of Social Services with input from organisations such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and ANROWS.

### New initiatives

To further support efforts to build the evidence base and measure the impact of the next National Plan, this Budget includes \$19 million over five years for ANROWS to continue its role in providing national leadership on data and evidence related to violence against women and children.

## Addressing women's safety at work

The Government is committed to ensuring all Australian workplaces are safe and free from sexual harassment, which will enable women to reach their full potential in the workforce. The Government recognises that sexual harassment remains all too prevalent. In 2018, around 39 per cent of women had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the previous five years.<sup>21</sup>

The Government has responded to the *Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report* (Respect@Work report) and *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces* (Set the Standard report). Both reports were undertaken by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Kate Jenkins.

The Government's response to the Respect@Work report, *A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian workplaces*, recognises that work is required across agencies and jurisdictions to implement all recommendations of the Respect@Work report, and that states and territories and the private sector all have a key role to play. Work is underway to implement the Government's response to all recommendations, with 42 of the 55 recommendations of the Respect@Work report fully implemented or fully funded, and \$66.5 million committed to implementation to date.

All jurisdictions have provided their own responses to the Respect@Work report to the Commonwealth. The National Cabinet discussed updates from jurisdictions and intergovernmental bodies on consideration of the Respect@Work recommendations at its 6 August 2021 meeting. At its 10 December 2021 meeting, the National Cabinet considered the progress on improving the consistency of workplace sexual harassment data collection and sharing. The National Cabinet noted that the Council will continue to work to improve data collection, reporting and sharing, to support preventing and addressing workplace sexual harassment.

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21 AIHW (2019) *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia: continuing the national story*

New funding in this Budget, to support the next National Plan, will further support implementation of the Roadmap for Respect, with \$3.4 million being provided for measures that will support women's safety in the workplace.

Funding of \$1.6 million over two years to establish a dedicated industry outreach and support team in the Australian Human Rights Commission to assist industry to respond to and support people who may wish to come forward with historical complaints of sexual harassment will further support implementation of Recommendation 27 of the Respect@Work report.

Funding of \$1.8 million to provide information, advice and assistance to women who experience workplace issues, including sexual harassment, will further support implementation of Recommendation 49 of the Respect@Work report. This funding will be provided through a grant opportunity made available to the Northern Territory and Queensland working women's centres.

### **Box 3: Set the Standard**

All workplaces should be safe and respectful, as outlined in the Statement of Acknowledgement that was delivered in Parliament on 8 February 2022. The Government is working towards implementing all 28 recommendations of the Set the Standard report (see Box 3).

A Statement of Acknowledgement was the first recommendation from *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces* (Jenkins Report) undertaken by Sex Discrimination Commissioner and the Australian Human Rights Commission. The Government is working towards implementing all 28 recommendations in the report, which call for action by all who work in Commonwealth Parliamentary workplaces, including political parties and independents, and all Parliamentary departments.

Over 1,750 individuals and organisations made contributions to the Jenkins Report, which highlights that people, particularly women, in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces have experienced bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault. The Report provides a comprehensive framework to bring about cultural change in parliamentary workplaces and provide clear and effective mechanisms to prevent and address bullying and sexual harassment and assault.

The Statement of Acknowledgment was delivered by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. It acknowledged the unacceptable history of workplace bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces, and commits to working across the Parliament to implement all of the recommendations within the timeframes proposed by Commissioner Jenkins.

In line with the recommendations, the Parliament has also passed legislation to provide additional protections to staff of Parliamentarians and established a Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards to inquire into and report on matters relating to the development of codes of conduct for Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces. The Government has also commissioned a comprehensive review of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act).

The Implementation of these recommendations builds on the changes already introduced following the Foster Review (Review of the Parliamentary Workplace: Responding to Serious Incidents), including new independent workplace complaints mechanism, as an independent, confidential, trauma-informed parliamentary support line and the rollout of workplace safety and respect training for staff and parliamentarians.

In delivering on the recommendations of both of these reports, the Parliament of Australia has recognised it has an obligation to set the standard for the nation and aspire to best practice in the prevention of and response to any instances of bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault.

## Women's economic security

Women's workforce participation is at a record high, women are earning more than ever before, women's unemployment is at its lowest level since 1974, and the gender pay gap continues to narrow. Australia has well exceeded its 2014 G20 target to reduce the gender participation gap between working-aged women and men by 25 per cent by 2025. The gender pay gap has fallen from 17.4 per cent in 2013 to 13.8 per cent in 2021, having reached a record low of 13.4 per cent in November 2020. Progress has been driven by substantial social and economic change, higher rates of education, and government policy, including more affordable child care.

Despite this progress, there is still more work to do to progress women's economic security and narrow the gender pay gap. Women continue to disproportionately experience gender discrimination, be in lower-paid occupations and part-time work, and are more likely to be impacted by having and caring for children. Governments, business, communities and individuals all need to work together to continue to address ongoing barriers to women entering the workforce, progressing their career and improving their overall economic security.

The 2022-23 Women's Budget Statement reaffirms the Government's commitment to further strengthen women's economic security. In this Budget, the Government is investing \$482.0 million in measures to give women greater flexibility and choice about how to manage work and care, and is supporting them into more diverse industries, jobs of the future and leadership positions. Key measures include: the provision of up to 20 weeks of Enhanced Paid Parental Leave for Families; support for women into higher paid jobs of the future; and support for increased diversity in leadership positions.

These new measures build on the Government's \$1.9 billion investment in women's economic security in the 2021-22 Budget, which comprised \$1.7 billion in additional funding over five years to improve child care affordability to support women's workforce participation. The Multiple Child Subsidy is ongoing and demand driven.

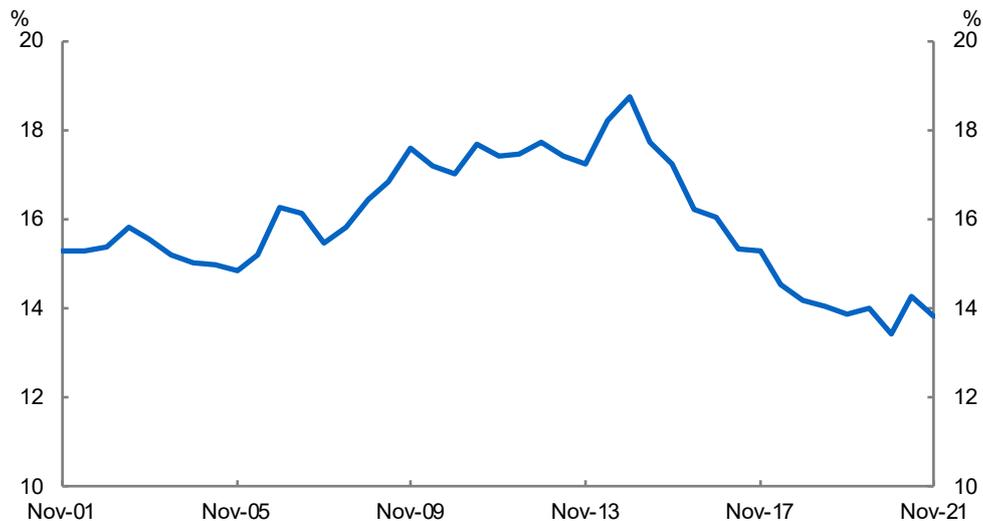
### Gender pay gap

A range of interrelated factors contribute to the gender pay gap, including different outcomes between women and men in education, skills, and the labour force, as well as social attitudes and gender norms. Strong economic performance and a tight labour market are providing women with more opportunities than ever before, and the range of initiatives included across the entire 2022-23 Budget – as well as targeted investments in this Statement – will assist to further narrow the gap.

### The national gender pay gap

Australia’s national gender pay gap is the difference between the average weekly ordinary time earnings of full-time female and male employees.<sup>22</sup> It results from social and economic factors that lower women’s earning capacity relative to men, and reflects time out of the workforce, industrial and occupational segregation, and discrimination and bias.

**Chart 1: The national gender pay gap over time**



Source: ABS, *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*, November 2021, seasonally adjusted series.

The current gender pay gap is 13.8 per cent, with women earning on average \$255.30 per week less than men (Chart 1).<sup>23</sup> This is the second lowest gap on record, after 13.4 per cent in November 2020. Over the past decade there has been a significant decrease in the national gender pay gap, falling from 17.2 per cent in November 2013.<sup>24</sup> This suggests there has been an underlying structural shift in the earnings profiles of women and men.

Australia’s labour market is highly segregated by gender. One third of all working women are employed in just two industries: health care and social assistance, and education and training.<sup>25</sup> This contributes to the gender pay gap, as these industries typically attract lower pay than male-dominated ones. Further, on average men earn more than women within every industry in Australia, even those that are heavily female

<sup>22</sup> Ordinary time earnings is the base amount paid to employees in their ordinary hours of work, and excludes other payments such as superannuation, overtime, commissions, and other discretionary pay.

<sup>23</sup> ABS, *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*, November 2021, seasonally adjusted series.

<sup>24</sup> ABS, *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*, November 2021, seasonally adjusted series.

<sup>25</sup> ABS, *Labour Force, Detailed, Australia*, January 2022, original series.

dominated, as men are more likely to be in senior positions and occupations that attract higher pay.<sup>26</sup>

Lower workforce participation and differences in earnings impact women's superannuation balances at retirement age. In 2018-19, the gender gap in median superannuation balances for persons aged 60-64 was 23.4 per cent.<sup>27</sup> It is important to note this reflects differences in workforce participation and earnings dating back decades. Lower financial security and independence put women at higher risk of poverty in old age and can make it harder for women experiencing family and domestic violence. The superannuation gap is expected to narrow over time on account of the narrowing in the gender pay gap, increases in women's workforce participation and the maturing of the superannuation system.<sup>28</sup> Getting more women into the workforce and into higher paying jobs is the most meaningful way to increase superannuation balances over time.

One of the largest contributors to differences in earnings across lifetimes is the impact of children on mothers' work patterns. The arrival of children creates a large and persistent increase in the gender gap in earnings, averaging 55 per cent in the five years following childbirth, and persisting more than ten years after birth.<sup>29</sup> This is primarily because mothers typically reduce their paid work hours or exit the labour force to take on most of the caring responsibilities, while many fathers' work patterns remain unchanged. Reducing barriers to women's workforce participation, which includes increasing the share of caring responsibilities, is key to narrowing the gap.

Differences in earnings between men and women begin upon entry into the workforce and grow over time. Among employed individuals with graduate degrees, a narrow gender earnings gap of 4.5 per cent exists at university graduation. Within three years of graduation, this gap widens to 10 per cent, and by nine years it reaches almost 25 per cent (Chart 2).<sup>30</sup>

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26 ABS, *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*, November 2021, original series.

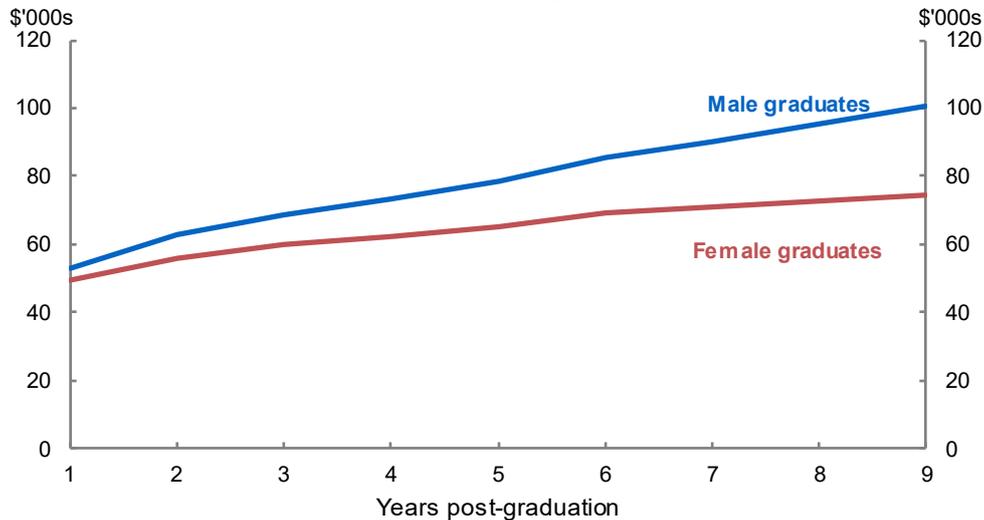
27 2018-19 ATO Taxation Statistics.

28 *2021 Intergenerational Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, p. 115.

29 Treasury analysis of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Release 19.0 and ATO Longitudinal Information Files, 2020.

30 Treasury analysis of Labour Market Tracker microdata.

**Chart 2: Earnings differentials begin at graduation and grow over time**



Notes: Analysis focuses on 2009 graduates who are in either part or full-time employment, income is expressed in real 2021 terms and includes salary income only.

Source: Treasury analysis using microdata from the ABS DataLab.

### Further narrowing the gender pay gap

Narrowing the gender pay gap requires collective effort from all levels of government, business, and the community. As the largest employer of Australian women, the private sector must work in partnership with governments to drive change.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is a statutory Government agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. Non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees are required to report annually against standardised gender equality indicators. WGEA provides analysis and insights to employers about their results, including benchmarking their performance against their industry. This generates an online database that helps tackle gender pay gaps and improves understanding of the policies and practices that make workplaces more equal.

The 2021-22 Budget provided a further \$6 million in funding for WGEA to strengthen its role in supporting the Respect@Work Council to prevent workplace sexual harassment and also announced a review of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act* (WGE Act). The Government also committed to Commonwealth public service agencies reporting to WGEA to create a more comprehensive and accurate data set of the Australian workforce. Further, at National Cabinet in December 2021, states and territories agreed to provide public sector data to WGEA.

The WGE Act Review was undertaken in 2021 and considered areas of future focus. Capturing feedback from a range of stakeholders, it recommends actions to accelerate progress on gender equality in workplaces and streamline reporting for employers. These recommended actions include publishing organisation gender pay gaps at employer levels to improve transparency and requiring large employers (500 or more employees) to set measurable gender equality targets.

The Government is further driving progress through its work with National Cabinet to develop a nationally consistent reporting framework to measure progress on women's economic security. This will help to identify programs that are successfully operating within states and territories, so they can be scaled and replicated nationally. The framework will enable governments to measure themselves against consistent indicators of women's economic security.

#### **New initiative**

The Government is investing \$18.5 million over four years from 2022-23 for the **Workplace Gender Equality Agency to further drive progress towards gender equality in Australian workplaces.**

The Government is working towards implementing all recommendations of the review of the WGE Act. In this Budget, the Government is providing additional resources to WGEA to ensure they are equipped to implement these recommendations and other initiatives, including the establishment of Excellence in Workplace Gender Equality Awards. The Awards will expand on WGEA's Employer of Choice for Gender Equality recognition framework to reward employer action on gender equality in workplaces across the country, both big and small, in the private and public sectors.

At National Cabinet in December 2021, states and territories agreed to provide public sector data to WGEA to strengthen WGEA's dataset. The additional resources will also allow WGEA to provide tailored support to smooth the transition to an expanded reporting base, with state and territory public sector data effectively expanding WGEA's workforce coverage in Australia to around 60 per cent. This will enable more in-depth data and analysis on gender equality indicators, such as understanding differences across occupations, which in turn helps to identify where action is needed.

## Workforce participation

More women are in jobs in Australia than ever before. Since February 2000, the participation rate for women aged 15+ has increased by 8.3 percentage points to a record high of 62.4 per cent in February 2022. The difference between women's and men's participation rates has continued to narrow. The women's participation rate is now 8.5 percentage points below men's, compared to 18.0 percentage points in February 2000. The women's unemployment rate is now 3.8 per cent, lower than the overall unemployment rate of 4.0 per cent.<sup>31</sup>

Structural differences in the way women and men participate in the workforce contribute to different economic outcomes. Compared to working men, working women are more than twice as likely to be in part-time work and almost twice as likely to be both part-time *and* casual.<sup>32</sup> Part-time and casual work provide flexibility to manage work and family life. However, these jobs can be more vulnerable and provide less financial support. In each COVID-19 wave, women lost employment in higher numbers than men, largely due to their overrepresentation in part-time and casual work, and industries with high job losses following trading restrictions and lockdowns, such as accommodation and food services and retail trade.<sup>33</sup>

While there are broad trends in the way women participate in the workforce, women are not a homogenous group and they have diverse labour market experiences. Women experiencing multiple sources of disadvantage tend to have higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of workforce participation than the national average for women.<sup>34</sup>

Women also continue to do most of the unpaid work in Australian households. Women on average spend 32 hours per week on unpaid housework and child care, while men spend on average 21 hours. Even in households where both partners work full-time, women report doing 40 per cent more unpaid work than men.<sup>35</sup> Women took on most of the additional unpaid work caused by the pandemic, which may have contributed to greater reductions in participation and work hours. In May 2021, the ABS Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey found women were almost twice as likely as men to have spent 20 or more hours a week on unpaid caring and supervision of children, and more likely to have spent five or more hours on unpaid indoor housework.<sup>36</sup> Further, women's

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31 ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, February 2022, seasonally adjusted series.

32 ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, January 2022, original series.

33 Treasury analysis of ABS Longitudinal Labour Force Survey Microdata, and ABS Labour Force Survey.

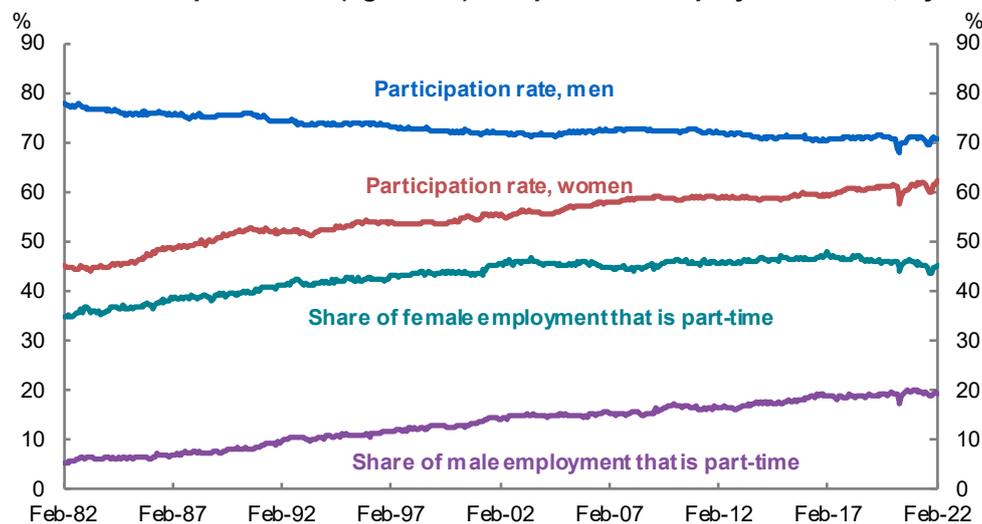
34 Treasury analysis of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Release 20.0.

35 Treasury analysis of Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Release 20.0.

36 ABS, *Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey*, May 2021.

dissatisfaction with their work-life balance rose more than men's, and from a higher starting point.<sup>37</sup>

**Chart 3: Participation rate (aged 15+) and part-time employment share, by sex**



Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, February 2022, seasonally adjusted series.

The pandemic has seen significant shifts in the labour market. After a large initial fall between March and May 2020, the number of employed women increased steadily over the next year to exceed pre-pandemic levels (Chart 4). The arrival of the Delta variant in mid-2021 saw women's employment fall, but at around half the rate of the first wave.<sup>38</sup> Most people remained attached to their job through the Delta wave.<sup>39</sup> This job attachment meant, as restrictions eased, many people quickly returned to work and monthly hours worked rapidly recovered.

### Recovery and outlook

Women's employment has increased substantially in recent months, with more women in work than ever before, a record high participation rate and unemployment at its lowest level since 1974.<sup>40</sup> There are 377,000 more people in work than before the pandemic, with women making up 250,000 of the increase.<sup>41</sup> A significant number of women moved into a new job in 2021: around one million women changed jobs, compared to around 800,000 men.<sup>42</sup> This is a positive sign for women's economic

37 Craig, L. & Churchill, B., 'Dual -earner parent couples' work and care during COVID-19', *Supplement: Feminist Frontiers*, 2021, vol. 28, no. 1.

38 ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, February 2022, seasonally adjusted series.

39 ABS, *Job attachment during the pandemic*, February 2022.

40 ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, February 2022, seasonally adjusted series.

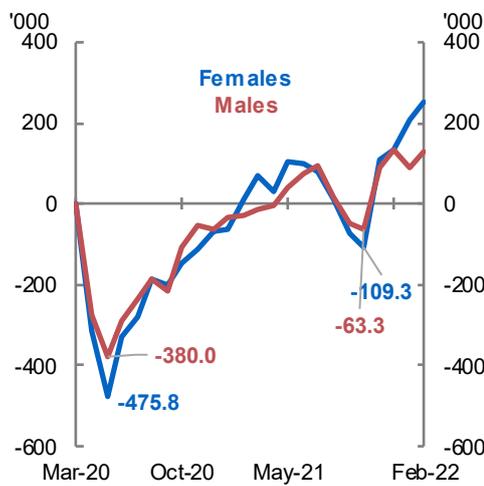
41 ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, February 2022, seasonally adjusted series.

42 Treasury analysis of ABS Longitudinal Labour Force microdata, December 2021.

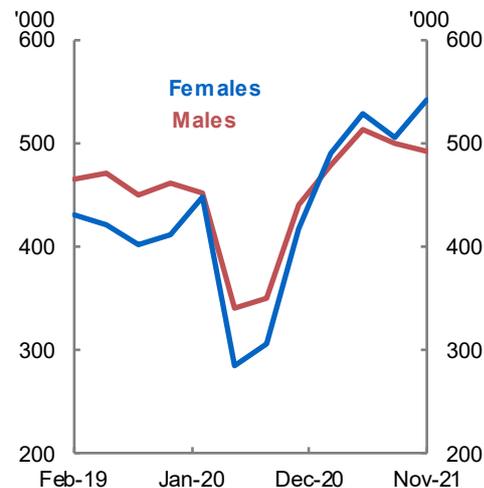
outcomes, as job switching often involves promotions and is associated with wage growth.<sup>43</sup>

With an increasingly tight labour market, increased women's participation can help address workforce shortages. Many women want to work more: the women's underemployment rate is consistently higher than men's, and women make up around two-thirds of potential workers who have stated they would like to work but are unable to.<sup>44</sup> Australian women are a highly skilled labour source; increasing their participation and reducing barriers to entry or returning to the workforce after time away can support economic growth.

**Chart 4: Change in employment compared with March 2020, by sex**



**Chart 5: New jobs started, by sex**



Note: For Chart 5, a new job is defined as 'new' if the tenure is less than 3 months.

Source: Treasury Analysis of ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, February 2022, seasonally adjusted series (Chart 4); Treasury analysis of ABS Longitudinal Labour Force microdata, December 2021 (Chart 5).

### Flexibility to work and care

Policies that remove barriers or disincentives to women's workforce participation support both women's economic security and the economy. Parents with young children – particularly secondary earners who are predominantly women – can face disincentives to work or to increase hours as a result of out-of-pocket costs.

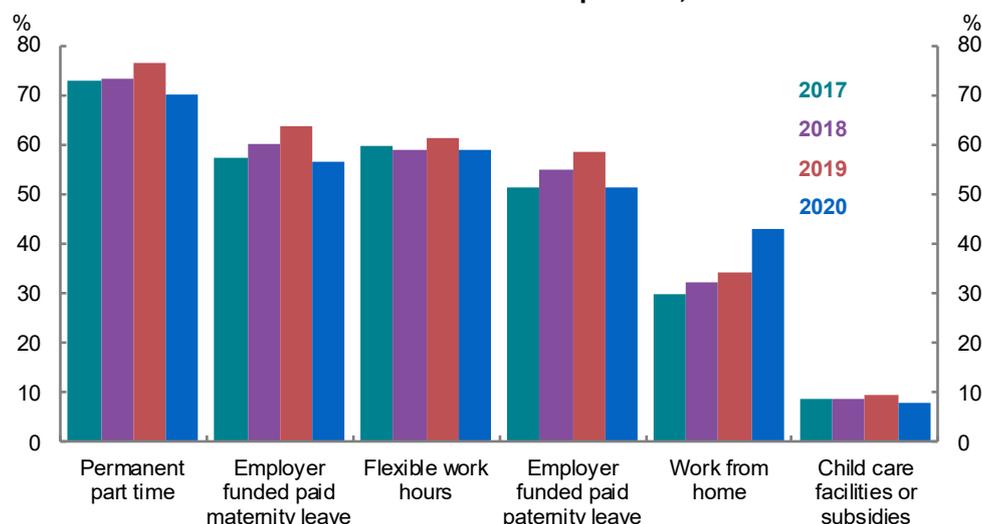
Access to affordable child care helps to remove barriers and disincentives to participation and supports parents with young children to make a meaningful choice about whether to return to work or increase their hours. The participation of mothers in the workforce has increased markedly over the past three decades. However, care

43 Deutscher, N., 'Job-to-Job Transitions and the Wages of Australian Workers', Treasury Working Paper, 2019.

44 Treasury analysis of ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, February 2022, seasonally adjusted series; ABS, *Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia*, July 2021.

responsibilities remain a primary reason that women work part-time or do not participate in the workforce.<sup>45</sup>

**Chart 6: Prevalence of flexible work policies, 2017 to 2020<sup>46</sup>**



Note: Survey respondents were asked: 'Please indicate whether you, or other employees working at a similar level to you at your workplace, would be able to access these conditions and entitlements that employers sometimes provide their employees'.

Source: Treasury analysis of Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Release 20.0.

Scarcity of flexible work for certain roles and industries can limit opportunities for promotion, with many high paying managerial positions still requiring long hours and inflexible schedules. In 2020, access to opportunities to work from home increased significantly (Chart 6). There is a risk that women's higher incidence of working from home may limit career progression, by reducing networking and collaboration, or if more visible employees are regarded as more productive.<sup>47</sup> Continuing to normalise flexible work for both women *and* men will help minimise this risk, support women's employment outcomes, and enable men to spend more time on unpaid work and care.

### Child care support

The Government is expected to spend a record \$10.3 billion on child care services in 2021-22, supporting women's workforce participation and 1.3 million Australian children and their families. This includes \$9.9 billion on the Child Care

<sup>45</sup> Treasury analysis of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Release 20.0.

<sup>46</sup> COVID-19 resulted in temporary compositional change to the workforce. It is likely that decreases in some flexible work practices in 2020 reflect these short-term compositional changes, rather than structural changes to the types of flexible roles available.

<sup>47</sup> Productivity Commission, Research paper: Working from home, 2021.

Subsidy (CCS), a means-tested payment to child care providers that substantially reduces out-of-pocket child care costs, particularly for low and middle-income families.

As part of a commitment to increase women's workforce participation, the Government made an additional \$1.7 billion investment in the 2021-22 Budget to improve the affordability of child care for about 250,000 families, who will benefit by around \$2,260 a year.

- From 10 December 2021, the annual \$10,655 cap on the CCS that applied to families earning over \$190,015 (2021-22 terms) was removed.
- From 7 March 2022, the rate of CCS was increased by 30 percentage points for families with two or more children in care, up to a maximum rate of 95 per cent.

Under these combined changes, and assuming an average hourly fee of \$10.80, a family earning \$120,000 with two children in centre-based day care for four days a week will receive a subsidy of 95 per cent for their second child, up from 69 per cent, saving approximately \$110 a week. With the new measures in place, around three quarters of subsidies will go to families earning under \$150,000 in 2022-23. A family in the same situation earning \$180,000 will receive a subsidy of 80 per cent, up from 50 per cent, saving around \$130 a week.

The Government also helps parents access child care through the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF), a grant program that provides funding to eligible child care services in regional, remote and disadvantaged communities. Since 2018, more than \$220 million has been invested in the CCCF, supporting over 1,000 child care services.

In response to the impact of COVID-19 on critical child care services, the Government provided approximately \$3.2 billion in targeted support since the start of the pandemic to assist families and help keep child care services open and staff employed during COVID-19 lockdowns. Support included financial relief through CCS arrangements, including additional allowable absences and the relaxing of gap fee requirements, \$280 million in further business continuity payments to over 6,400 services in 2021, and grants of up to \$150,000 through the CCCF.

The Government has put in place additional support for child care services affected by the February-March 2022 floods on the east coast, and families using these services. It is providing \$6.9 million for Flood Support Payments of \$10,000 for flood-affected child care services, with additional absences and the relaxing of gap fee requirements to support families. This is in addition to increasing the support available for more severely affected services through Special Circumstances grants in the CCCF with funding available increased from \$4 million up to \$22.4 million in 2021-22 and \$7.7 million in 2022-23.

**New initiatives**

This Budget provides further funding to support the establishment of services in remote and regional areas. \$19.4 million over five years from 2021-22 will be provided through the **Community Child Care Fund** for up to 20 new services in areas where there is limited or no access to child care. This will help regional Australian families by giving them proximate access to child care, leading to better flexible work options in our regions that will support women's economic security.

This funding is on top of the Government's current annual investment in child care and the \$1.7 billion provided in the 2021-22 Budget to increase the Child Care Subsidy for families with multiple children and remove the annual cap. The Government's investment in child care has grown from \$6.2 billion in 2013-14 to over \$10 billion in 2021-22.

To support workplace flexibility, the Government will provide funding of \$1.4 million over three years from 2022-23 to UNICEF Australia and Parents at Work. This investment will support the expansion of the **Family Friendly Workplaces** initiative to a further 500 workplaces across Australia. Best practice guidance for participating employers will be provided through 'National Work + Family Standards' (the Standards) so they can create a family friendly workplace culture. Organisations are assessed against the Standards and can be awarded certification as a Family Inclusive Workplace.

This program was established in 2021, alongside 23 founding and supporting partner organisations from across Australia. Organisations are assessed against the Standards', which considers approaches to flexible work, parental leave, care and wellbeing and family and domestic violence. There are now over 50 organisations who have been awarded certification as a Family Inclusive Workplace under the Standards.

## **Paid parental leave**

The Government's Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme is designed to provide financial support to parents to take time out of the paid workforce to care for a young child. It also aims to encourage women's workforce participation, help employers retain skilled staff and to enhance the health and wellbeing of new parents and children. The PPL scheme is currently comprised of two payments for eligible carers of a newborn or recently adopted child:

- Parental Leave Pay is provided for up to 18 weeks at a rate based on the national minimum wage
- Dad and Partner Pay for up to 2 weeks at a rate based on the national minimum wage to fathers and partners.

Carers must meet certain eligibility criteria, including a work, income and residency test. In 2020-21, the Government invested \$2.4 billion in PPL to support nearly 259,000 working parents.

In 2020, the Government introduced some flexibility measures, which enabled primary carers to use an initial continuous 12-week period of Parental Leave Pay before taking up the remaining six weeks flexibly at any time during the two years following the birth or adoption of a child. Further adjustments were introduced from September 2021 to ensure those who lost work due to a COVID-19 lockdown or special circumstances (such as family and domestic violence, natural disaster or severe medical condition) are not disqualified under work test rules from receiving payments.

There is increasing recognition of the benefits that can result from fathers taking leave during the early years of their child's life, including on child development. In Australia, the proportion of men who currently use Parental Leave Pay remains very small (0.5 per cent of parents using the scheme in 2020-21 were men). In 2020-21, less than 90,000 fathers and partners received Dad and Partner Pay, which accounts for only around 30 per cent of births each year.

The overwhelming majority of parents who use primary carer leave through the Government's Parental Leave Pay (99.5 per cent) and employer-funded schemes (88 per cent) are women. Parental Leave Pay can be accessed by eligible parents in addition to any paid leave provided by their employer, however Dad and Partner Pay cannot, which may be a disincentive. Approximately 60 per cent of private sector employers offered paid parental leave to their employees (to women and men and to women only) in 2020-21, up from 56.7 per cent the previous year. These arrangements are more common among larger employers, with 85 per cent of employers with more than 5,000 staff offering leave compared to 54 per cent of employers with 100 to 250 staff.

### New initiatives

The Government is investing \$346.1 million over five years from 2021-22 to introduce **Enhanced Paid Parental Leave** (PPL), which is fairer and provides full flexibility for eligible working families. These changes will provide increased choice for families to decide how best to manage work and care. Eligibility for the scheme is also being expanded. Changes to PPL, to be introduced no later than 1 March 2023 following stakeholder consultations, will increase eligibility for working parents, which will further help families with raising children and with cost of living pressures. These changes will benefit the roughly 260,000 parents who access PPL annually, with an additional 2,200 families gaining access who were previously not eligible.

The changes further demonstrate the Government's continued commitment to removing barriers to women's workforce participation and equality of opportunity. The enhancements will also support businesses – particularly smaller employers who may not be able to fund their own parental leave – retain valuable staff and negotiate flexible working arrangements.

To reflect the different needs of today's families, the changes will support flexibility by integrating Dad and Partner Pay and Parental Leave Pay to provide eligible families access to up to 20 weeks leave to use in ways that suit their specific circumstances. A single scheme will reduce complexity for working families and enable eligible parents to share the full PPL entitlement between them within two years of their child's birth or adoption if they both are in the workforce. It will assist to promote equality between mothers and fathers and empower families to make their own decisions without being restricted by policy settings defined by 'primary' or 'secondary' carers.

The changes will continue to support the health and wellbeing of birth mothers, with women better able to take the amount of leave that works for them. The changes also equalise access to the scheme. In the way mothers already can, dads and partners will be able to access the Government's scheme at the same time as any employer-funded leave, incentivising fathers to further utilise parental leave. Single parents will also benefit from the extended 20-week entitlement, in the same way a household with two parents can.

With more women in work and earning more than ever before, the Government is also making adjustments to the income test to further support women's workforce participation.

Currently, mothers who earn up to \$151,350 can access Parental Leave Pay even if their partner earns a high income, but a family in which the mother earns more than \$151,350 – even where the partner has no income or the partner income is much lower – is not entitled to Parental Leave Pay.

To remedy this, the Government is broadening the income test to include a household income threshold of \$350,000 per year. This change will particularly support women who are the primary earner and do not currently have access to employer-funded parental leave, noting that between 2010-11 and 2017-18 the number of women with a taxable income of more than \$150,000 more than doubled from 99,800 to 209,600. No household will be worse off under these changes.

## Education, employment and enterprise

Australia has made significant progress in recent decades in closing long-standing gender gaps in education, strengthening women's empowerment and economic security. In tertiary education, girls and women comprise just under half of students in vocational education and training (VET) and have outnumbered men at university for more than 30 years.<sup>48</sup> Despite this strong educational performance, women in Australia continue to earn less than men in employment and are less likely to own and run a business. There are several factors that influence these gender gaps but a key driver is that women typically study and work in fields with lower financial returns.

The Government is addressing key barriers to women's education, employment, and enterprise to support their economic security. This Budget builds on significant investments made in previous years to encourage and support more women to take up roles in male-dominated and higher paid occupations. Women will also benefit from the significant investment in broader skills and employment initiatives, including the new Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System and the rollout of Workforce Australia.

### Supporting women's employment opportunities

In addition to a range of measures that support all Australians, the Government continues to invest in programs that further assist women's employment opportunities, including at different stages of the lives. These include the:

- **National Careers Institute Partnership Grants Program** (\$12.2 million over two years from 2021-22) for grants of between \$20,000 to \$350,000 to employers, training providers, schools and community organisations to facilitate career opportunities and pathways for women, particularly in non-traditional industries and occupations

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<sup>48</sup> NCVER 2021 - Total VET students and courses 2020 | DataBuilder; Grattan Institute, 'Mapping Australian higher education 2018'.

- **Mid-Career Checkpoint program** (\$75 million over four years to 2023-2024), which supports eligible carers, predominantly women, to return to paid work, or advance or change their career
- **Launch into Work program** (\$74.7 million over four years to June 2028), which provides for tailored pre-employment projects, through partnerships with employers, to build the skills and experiences of job seekers for identified entry-level jobs, with 84 per cent being women
- **Career Revive program** (\$4.1 million over five years to 2023-24), which supports medium and large businesses to attract and retain women returning to work after a career break, with over 50 businesses expected to participate by 30 June 2024.

In addition to these initiatives, the Government has made targeted investments to support employment in the female-dominated child care sector in response to the labour market disruptions caused by COVID-19. From 24 January 2022, child care providers can choose to offer a discounted fee to employees with children enrolled at three of their services to support providers to attract and retain staff. The discount will not affect the employee's Child Care Subsidy entitlement.

### **Supporting women into STEM**

Evidence shows women are less likely than men to both study and work in STEM fields. In 2019, 15 per cent of students in STEM vocational education and 36 per cent in university courses were women. Despite making up nearly half of the workforce in Australia, women comprise just 28 per cent of STEM workers. STEM skills are a critical enabler of productivity, economic growth and realising the potential of emerging industries, including in advanced manufacturing, technological and digital advancement, space, low emissions technologies and scientific research and commercialisation. STEM jobs are projected to grow more than twice as fast as other jobs over the five years to November 2025 and typically provide higher incomes. Increasing STEM capability is also critical to Australia's ability to compete in international markets, to create new opportunities for industries, and to support high living standards.

Building on its substantial \$147 million investment to date in supporting women in STEM, on 11 February 2022, the Government announced an additional \$6.7 million to ensure the continued success of three key initiatives. These include the:

- **Superstars of STEM program** (\$2 million over four years to 2024-25), which is delivered by Science and Technology Australia to increase the visibility of women in STEM as role models and has supported 150 women to date
- **Women in STEM Ambassador program** (\$2.3 million over two years to 2025-26), through which Professor Lisa Harvey-Smith has reached 121,916 unique participants through 370 hours of public engagements and outreach

- **'Future You' awareness campaign** (\$2.4 million over four years to 2025-26), which provides an online platform that has reached 3.1 million children, parents and carers to raise awareness amongst children aged 8 to 12, as well as their parents and carers.

The **Boosting the Next Generation of Women in STEM program** is also being delivered by the (ATSE) at a cost of \$41.2 million over seven years. ATSE manages up to 500 university scholarships to help women in STEM re-enter the workforce, seek higher qualifications, and develop senior leadership skills.

### **Supporting women into non-traditional occupations**

In 2021, women only represented eight per cent of apprentices in non-traditional trade occupations such as carpenter, plumber and electrician. Many industries and organisations are recognising the importance of increasing the representation of women. Working to increase the number of women in non-traditional trades will help to address skills shortages, can improve workplace practices, and further promote women's economic security because these trades are in-demand and highly paid. The Government has invested in a range of initiatives that continue to support more women into non-traditional occupations.

The Government's Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP) funds 75 project grants benefiting more than 50,000 women and girls to improve their workforce participation, leadership representation, economic security, and health and wellbeing. This includes projects designed to increase access and participation of women in traditionally male-dominated industries. Funding has been provided for:

- the **Women Building Australia program** (\$2.3 million over six years to 2023-24) delivered by Master Builders Australia to support women in the building and construction industry and encourage girls to consider building and construction as a career path
- the **Girls of Steel project** (\$1.2 million over three years to 2022-23) to encourage women aged 17 to 24 to enter into an apprenticeship in a non-traditional trade such as fitting and turning, sheet metal fabrication, boiler making, welding, casting and moulding, diesel, mechanical or electrical fitting
- the **Women in Work Boots initiative** (\$0.8 million over three years to 2023-24) to provide support for unemployed and underemployed women in Tasmania who are interested in pursuing a career in the agriculture, horticulture, civil construction, rail, transport, mining and quarrying industries.

## Supporting women's enterprise

Increasing women's entrepreneurship in Australia is important to the economy. Around 36 per cent of small business owners were women as of January 2022.<sup>49</sup> The lower representation of women is common in many OECD countries. In international studies, women cite a lack of free time as a key obstacle to entrepreneurship. Other common factors include a lack of experience or skill, an absence of entrepreneurial networks and mentors, and challenges accessing finance.<sup>50</sup>

The Government's **Boosting Female Founders Initiative** (\$52.2 million over five years to 2024-25) helps to address several barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. It provides grants of between \$25,000 and \$480,000 to majority women-owned and led start-ups to help them scale their businesses into domestic and global markets. The program commenced in 2020 and has supported start-ups such as Planet Protector Packaging, which manufactures a sustainable insulated packaging called Woolpack. This is in addition to broader initiatives such as the Entrepreneurs' Programme, which delivers support to eligible small and medium businesses to help them grow, innovate and commercialise, and the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme, which provides training and assistance to help eligible unemployed people to start and run a new small business.

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<sup>49</sup> ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, January 2022, original series.

<sup>50</sup> OECD, *The Missing Entrepreneurs: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019.

### New initiatives

This Budget invests in a range of additional initiatives to encourage women's employment, with a focus on supporting more women to take-up opportunities in under-represented sectors and higher-paid trades and occupations.

To **boost the number of women in trades**, the Government is investing \$38.6 million over four years from 2022-23. Women who commence in higher paying trade occupations on the Australian Apprenticeship Priority List will be provided additional supports, such as mentoring. This measure will complement investment through the new Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System by guaranteeing gateway support services and in-training support places for women in non-traditional trades. This includes increasing availability of mentoring, peer support and enterprise skills training through Australian Apprenticeship Support Network providers.

The Government is investing \$4.7 million over five years from 2022-23 to **encourage women into the manufacturing industry** through networking events in metropolitan and regional areas and a mentorship program for women at all stages of their manufacturing career.

Significant demand is forecast for the tech workforce and this Budget provides \$3.9 million over two years from 2022-23 to **support more women into digitally skilled roles**. In partnership with industry, this initiative will provide mentoring and coaching to facilitate a mid-career transition into the 'tech workforce'.

To develop and grow women's entrepreneurial skills, the Government is investing \$9.0 million over three years from 2023-24 to expand the successful **Future Female Entrepreneurs program**. Funding will continue for the Academy for Enterprising Girls (10 to 18-year-olds) and the Accelerator for Enterprising Women, expanding it to include all women aged 18+. A new Senior Enterprising Women program will provide mentorship and programs to build enterprising skills for senior women who are unemployed or underemployed to become financially self-sufficient. A new Enterprising Women in Leadership program will pair early-stage entrepreneurs with experienced leaders and provide education for school leavers in leadership skills.

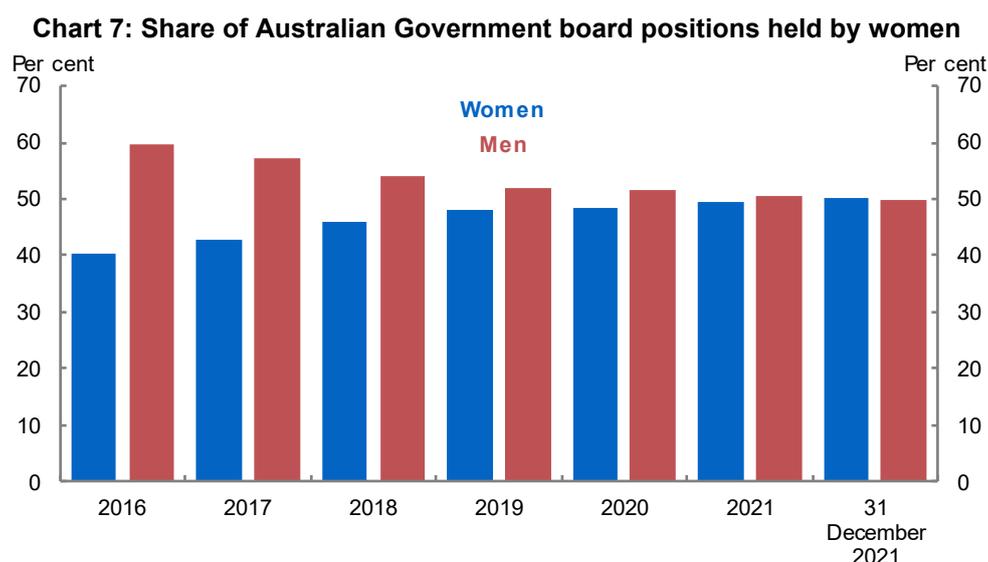
The Government will consult on how best to amend the National Employment Standards in the *Fair Work Act 2009* to **ensure redundancy payments more fairly reflect working hours** over the course of a person's employment. This is important given many women move between full-time and part-time work due to caring responsibilities.

## Women's leadership

More women in leadership roles is good for business and the economy. For the average ASX company, an increase of 10 percentage points or more in the share of female key management personnel is associated with a 6.6 per cent increase in market value.<sup>51</sup> Women leaders are also important role models and mentors for the next generation.

The Government is committed to encouraging more women into leadership positions in the private and public sector, including through programs that support women at all stages of the leadership pipeline.

The Government is leading by example. In 2021, the Government met the commitment it set in 2016 to achieve equal representation – women make up 50.2 per cent of Government board positions as of 31 December 2021 (Chart 7). This represents an 8.5 percentage point increase since 2013. In the public sector, the Government further drives change by setting goals and publicly reporting on progress.



Note: Data recorded on a financial year basis, however latest data (from December 2021) has been included in the chart.

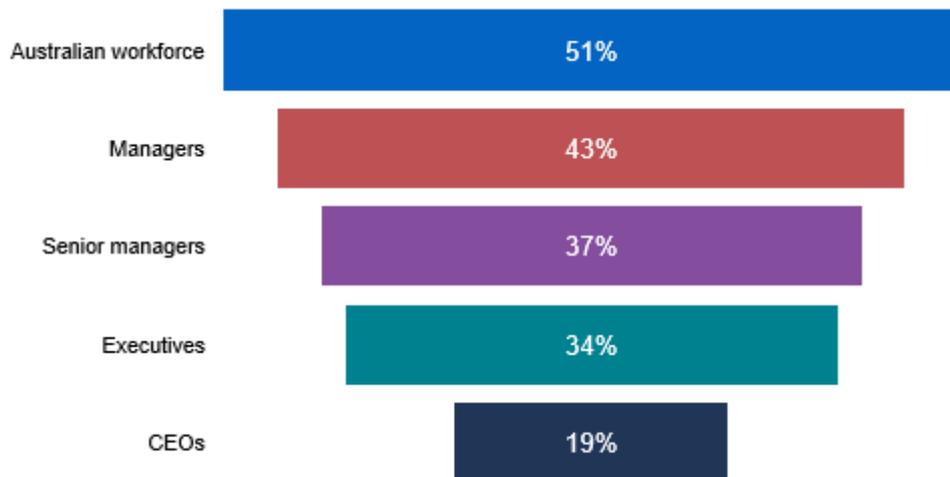
Source: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, as of December 2021.

<sup>51</sup> Gender Equity Insights 2020, Delivering the Business Outcomes, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre analysis of WGEA compliance dataset.

The Australian Public Service (APS) also leads the way in gender representation, with women making up 50 per cent of the Senior Executive Service and 53.2 per cent of Executive Level positions. At National Cabinet in December 2021, state and territory governments agreed to provide their public sector data to WGEA. This will strengthen WGEA’s already world-leading gender equality dataset.

The private sector has made significant progress in the past decade. Women are now taking up management roles at a faster rate than men; if this continues, in two decades there will be equal gender representation in full-time management positions.<sup>52</sup> For ASX 200 companies, in 2021, women held 34.2 per cent of board positions (up from 8.3 per cent in 2009) and 41.8 per cent of new board appointments (up from 5 per cent in 2009).<sup>53</sup> However, there is much further to go, particularly in the most senior positions and in companies outside the ASX 200. WGEA data indicates that in 2021 women made up 19.4 per cent of CEOs and 22.3 per cent of boards and governing bodies had no female directors (compared to 0.6 per cent with no male directors).<sup>54</sup>

**Chart 8: Share of women in decision-making roles in private organisations**



Notes: Executives includes heads of business and other key management personnel.  
Source: 2020-21 WGEA Scorecard.

The Government is committed to providing pathways for women into leadership. The Government’s Women’s Leadership and Development Program (WLDP) supports a range of programs aimed at increasing women’s leadership opportunities, as well as improving women’s employment and safety. In the 2021-22 Budget, the Government provided \$38.3 million over five years (2021-22 to 2025-26) to expand the WLDP.

52 WGEA, ‘Women in Leadership’.

53 Australian Institute of Company Directors, *Towards Board Gender Parity: Lessons from the Past – Directions for the Future*, 2021.

54 WGEA 2020-21 dataset.

This built on the \$47.9 million expansion (over four years 2020-21 to 2023-24) through the 2020 Women's Economic Security Statement.

WLDP projects are currently enabling women and girls to secure employment and take up leadership opportunities. To help improve gender equality in leadership roles, the Government has provided funding to the Australian Institute of Company Directors to deliver board diversity scholarships to support women to attend a company directors course. A number of other projects funded through the WLDP enable women's leadership, including:

- **Get Skilled Access** (\$0.7 million over three years to 2022-23), which builds leadership capability in current and retired women athletes with disability, and increases the talent pool for board selection and executive and administration roles in sporting organisations;
- the **Australian Power Institute's PowerfulWomen program** (\$0.9 million over four years to 2023-24), which improves participation and leadership opportunities for at least 1,700 women in male-dominated sectors across Australia, including within the power sector; and
- the **Diverse Women's Leadership Program** in Western Australia (\$0.6 million over three years to 2022-23), run by the Muslim Women's Support Centre of WA, which delivers leadership programs to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### **New initiatives**

The Government is committing \$9.4 million over five years from 2021-22 to support women at critical stages in their career and into leadership positions.

#### **Future Women's Jobs Academy**

To support women facing unique barriers to leadership, the Government is expanding the Future Women's Jobs Academy. The Jobs Academy helps unemployed and underemployed women to find a job, transition to a new career, upskill, gain more hours of work or start their own business by providing training, mentoring, and connections to real jobs. Through an online model, the expanded program will work with a minimum of 2,000 women over three years, predominantly women aged 45 years or older, who have the life experience to be effective leaders, but not the technical skills or mentor support, to transition them into management and leadership positions.

#### **Supporting gender balanced boards**

The Office for Women will oversee a refresh of the Government's BoardLinks platform to improve its functionality, including navigation and search capability, improving visibility of upcoming government board vacancies, promoting greater board diversity, and providing links to established networks and industry partners. This will support women to identify and access to the right networks and opportunities, which can be crucial to women making the jump to board positions.

### **Global efforts**

The Government supports women's leadership in international settings to improve representation and opportunities for women. In 2021, Australia participated in G20 EMPOWER, a group of senior public servants and high-profile business representatives from G20 countries focused on supporting women's leadership in the private sector. G20 EMPOWER launched a 'Best Practice Playbook' that highlighted Australia's 'Champions of Change' initiative and included an example of how an Australian company tackled the gender pay gap. G20 EMPOWER continues to provide advice to G20 leaders in 2022.

#### **Women leaders in sport**

In 2022, women made up 20 per cent of CEOs of national sporting organisations funded by the Australian Sports Commission and only 10 per cent of high-performance head coaches.

The Government invests in the **Women Leaders in Sport (WLIS) program** to provide women with development opportunities to reach their leadership potential in the sports industry as coaches, officials, administrators, team captains and mentors. The WLIS program includes leadership workshops for individuals and organisations, and development grants of up to \$10,000 (an increase from \$3,000 in 2019) for individuals and up to \$20,000 for organisations.

The Government has also invested in national sporting organisations and high-profile events to help promote women as elite athletes and role models and encourage greater participation, most recently in the 2021-22 Budget including \$27 million to Football Australia and \$5 million to Basketball Australia.

### New initiatives

The Government is committing \$10.3 million over four years from 2022-23 to further promote and create leadership, safety and employment opportunities for women in sport. The Australian Sports Commission will receive funding for:

- the **Community Sport Leaders Program**, to deliver leadership and governance workshops for women in the community sport sector, undertake research, and provide online education programs through the Australian Sport Learning Centre
- the **National Generation 2032 Coaching Program for High Performance**, to deliver talent and training programs to a further 10 female participants and extend the program for a year
- the **Community Coaches Program**, to support more than 200 female coaches per year to act as mentors across local, national and international sporting levels.

The Government is also investing in programs to encourage greater participation of women and girls in sport, with a strong focus on creating and expanding pipelines for women as future leaders and positive roles, including:

- \$2.6 million in 2022-23 for Basketball Australia to deliver **FIBA World Cup** legacy programs to encourage diversity and inclusion, as well as to increase participation
- \$3.1 million over two years from 2022-23 for Football Australia to expand the **Miniroos for Girls Program** (for girls aged 6-12 years) and the **Girls 12+ Football Your Way Engagement Program**, enabling an additional 30,000 and 8,800 girls respectively to participate in football.

The Government is investing \$15.0 million into the Whitten Oval redevelopment, which includes developing the **New Women's Health and Leadership Hub** to provide programs promoting girl's and women's health and leadership.

The Government is also supporting event delivery and legacy initiatives across the green and gold decade of major sporting events in Australia, including the **FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup 2022**, **FIFA Women's World Cup 2023**, **Netball World Cup 2027** and **Women's Rugby World Cup 2029**.

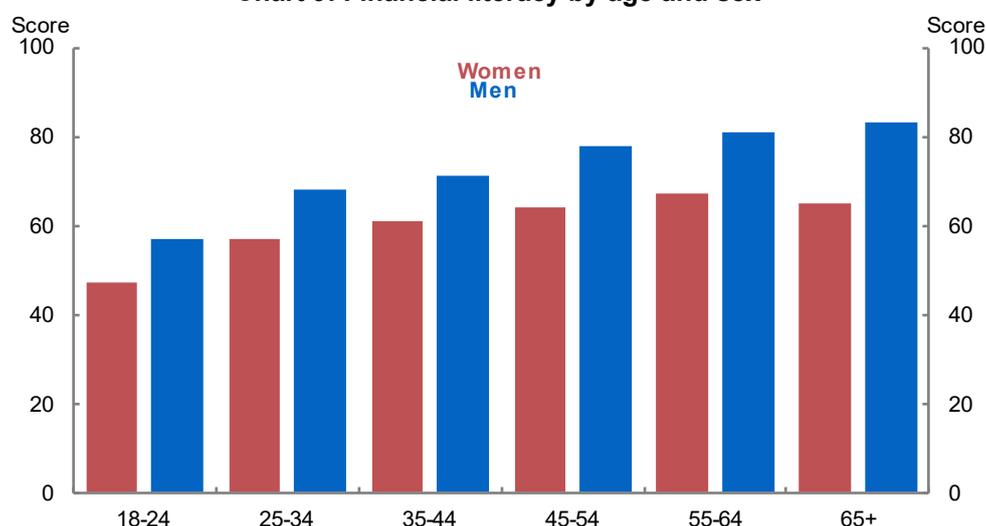
## Financial security and home ownership

### Financial capability

Financial capability enables people to make decisions, navigate complex financial systems, and behave in ways that improve their financial situation.

The 2021 National Financial Capability Survey found differences between women and men emerge at a young age and persist into retirement (Chart 9). Australian women did not perform as well on financial literacy, with women on average scoring 60 out of 100, while men scored 76. In addition, only 36 per cent of women have a financial plan for retirement, compared to 55 per cent of men.

**Chart 9: Financial literacy by age and sex**



Notes: Financial literacy is measured by the score out of 100 on a financial literacy questionnaire.

Source: 2020-21 National Financial Capability Survey.

The Government is committed to lifting women's financial capability. Women are a target cohort under the **2022 National Financial Capability Strategy**, along with young Australians, people in or near retirement, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Strategy provides a framework for action and to measure progress in priority areas.

The Government will sequentially introduce initiatives for each of the four target cohorts. Recognising the importance of intervening early, the Government is starting with young Australians, and has launched a new online resource, Money Managed. Early intervention is critical to ensuring the benefits cumulate over a lifetime. Money Managed is designed to help young people make smart and informed financial decisions to develop healthy financial habits. It is an interactive, mobile first platform that has practical information, tips and tools on earning, saving, spending and investing.

Following young Australians, the Government will focus on initiatives tailored to women's financial capability needs.

### **New initiatives**

#### **Financial capability workshops for female entrepreneurs**

Financial capability is an essential aspect of running or leading a business. It ensures businesses can meet their commercial obligations, plan for future growth and maximise their potential profit. Enabling more women to start successful small businesses fosters economic growth, increases economic security and independence for the business owner and elevates the status of women in business.

As part of the successful Boosting Female Founders Initiative, the Government will procure a specialist education provider to develop and operate small and intensive business-oriented online financial capability workshops for around 100 female entrepreneurs.

Improving women's financial capability is also critical to reducing instances of financial abuse and coercion. Out of 2.2 million women who have experienced emotional abuse from a current or previous partner since the age of 15, almost 50 percent had experienced financial abuse.<sup>55</sup> Financial abuse is a form of controlling behaviour and can be part of a broader pattern of coercive or violent behaviour. A common form of financial abuse is being excluded from financial decision-making or having limited access to information about an individual or household's money. The next *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (next National Plan) is expected to highlight financial abuse as a form of coercive control.

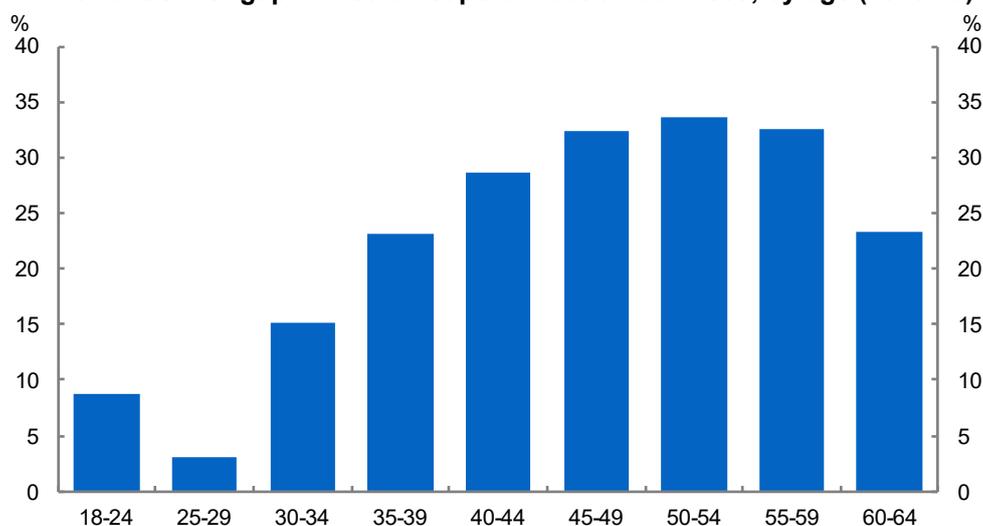
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<sup>55</sup> AIHW, 'Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story', 2019.

## Superannuation

In 2018-19, the median superannuation balance for persons aged 60 to 64 was \$137,051 for women and \$178,808 for men – a difference of \$42,000 or 23.4 per cent.<sup>56</sup> This difference is narrowing over time and will keep narrowing as women’s workforce participation increases, the gender pay gap narrows, and the superannuation system matures. However, a gap will remain so long as women spend fewer hours in paid work than men.

**Chart 10: Gender gap in median superannuation balances, by age (2018-19)**



Source: Treasury analysis of 2018-19 ATO Taxation Statistics.

The Government has introduced a range of measures to ensure the superannuation system supports women’s economic security in retirement. From 1 July 2022, legislation comes into effect that **removes the \$450 per month income threshold** under which employees do not have to be paid the superannuation guarantee by their employer. The measure will improve the coverage of the superannuation system, making a real difference to the retirement savings of around 300,000 lower income workers per month, 200,000 of whom are women.

Also from 1 July 2022, the work test for non-concessional and salary sacrificed contributions to superannuation for individuals aged 67 to 75 will be removed, and the eligibility age for the downsizer contribution will be reduced from 65 to 60 years. As women are more likely to make voluntary contributions to their superannuation than men, this additional flexibility will increase the ability for women to make contributions later in life. The extension of the downsizer contribution scheme to younger cohorts will particularly benefit people with moderate superannuation balances, including women; women currently account for around 55 per cent of downsizer contributions.

<sup>56</sup> ATO Taxation Statistics, 2018-19.

From 1 April 2022, the Government's reform to **improve the visibility of superannuation assets in family law proceedings** will come into effect. The Australian Taxation Office will be able to share information with the Courts on superannuation assets held by parties during family law disputes. This will help deliver fairer and more equitable outcomes for women going through separation proceedings by reducing the scope for former partners to under-disclose their assets.

These targeted measures are in addition to broader reforms implemented by the Government over recent years to improve equity and flexibility in the superannuation system and maximise the savings of all Australians. These include initiatives such as the low-income superannuation tax offset, facilitating contribution splitting between partners, protecting balances from undue erosion by fees and insurance premiums, and increasing transparency and accountability of super funds. Individuals with balances below \$500,000 are also able to catch up on their retirement savings by accessing unused portions of their concessional contributions cap on a rolling five-year basis. The most effective way to reduce gender gaps in retirement is by reducing them in working life.

## **Housing**

To support new and expanded emergency accommodation for women and children escaping violence, in this Budget the Government is further investing in accommodation support for women impacted by domestic and family violence, including \$100 million over five years for the successful **Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program** and \$54.6 million over five years for the **Keeping Women Safe in their Homes Program**, as part of funding to support the next National Plan.

The Government also provides around \$1.6 billion a year to states and territories through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA). This includes around \$132 million for homelessness services, with states and territories to match that funding. Older people, Indigenous Australians, and women and children affected by family and domestic violence are national priority homelessness cohorts under the NHHA. This is in addition to around \$5 billion the Government spends on Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). CRA provides support to around 1.4 million eligible households.

Since its establishment in 2018, the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) has supported more than 15,000 new and existing affordable dwellings through the provision of low-cost loans to Community Housing Providers. In support of the Government's response to the recommendations of the *Statutory Review of the Operation of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation Act 2018*, in the 2021-22 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook the Government increased NHFIC's liability cap from \$3 billion to \$3.5 billion. To build on this commitment, in the 2022-23 Budget the Government is increasing NHFIC's liability cap by an additional

\$2 billion, to \$5.5 billion. This increase in NHFIC's lending capacity is expected to support around 8,000 more social and affordable dwellings for vulnerable Australians.

Some of the loans extended by NHFIC to date have supported projects that provide accommodation specifically to older women, including:

- \$9 million to **Women's Housing Limited** to target women and children experiencing family violence, older women (over 55), working women from low to medium income groups
- \$70 million to **Evolve Housing** to support single women aged 55 and over, single women with children, and other vulnerable cohorts
- \$210 million to **St George Community Housing** to provide support to Indigenous people including women aged 55 years and over.

The Government is supporting housing outcomes for women across the housing spectrum. This includes the **Government's Home Guarantee Scheme**, which has already assisted almost 60,000 Australians to achieve their dream of homeownership. To build on that success the Government is expanding the Scheme to 50,000 places per year at a cost of \$8.6 million, including an expansion of the Family Home Guarantee to 5,000 places.

### **New initiative**

#### **Expansion of the Family Home Guarantee**

Announced in the 2021-22 Budget, the Family Home Guarantee is the first housing policy designed to specifically help single parents. The Family Home Guarantee supports single parents to build or purchase a home with a deposit of as little as two per cent. This lower deposit requirement recognises the struggle that single parents experience when trying to save for a deposit while paying rent and/or restarting working.

To date, the Family Home Guarantee has supported 1,940 single parents into homeownership, 85 per cent of whom have been single mothers. The program is supporting lower income earners – the average income of successful applicants to date is just under \$70,000. Most successful applicants have been aged between 40 and 49 years old.

To build on the early success of this program, the Government is doubling the number of places available under the Family Home Guarantee to 5,000 per year to 30 June 2025. This expansion will help support many more single parents with dependants into homeownership.

## Women's health and wellbeing

The Government is committed to addressing the health issues that most affect women and girls throughout their lives. The Government recognises that women have unique health experiences and challenges that require tailored information and services. Women have maternal healthcare needs, experience higher rates of chronic illness and different patterns of disease as they age, and are more likely to experience family, domestic and sexual violence.

In 2019, the Government released the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030* (the Strategy) to improve health outcomes for Australian women and girls, particularly those at greatest risk of poor health, and to reduce inequities between different groups. The Strategy identifies five priority areas:

- maternal, sexual and reproductive health
- healthy ageing
- chronic conditions and preventive health
- mental health
- health impacts of violence against women and girls.

In the 2022-23 Budget, the Government is making a \$330.6 million investment in key pillars of the Strategy, building on the \$535 million in funding for women's health in the 2021-22 Budget. Key investments include:

- \$58.3 million to support women experiencing endometriosis and pelvic pain
- \$23.0 million to support the National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan
- \$1.6 million to establish a National Women's Health Advisory Council to monitor and report on implementation of the Strategy
- \$0.5 million towards the Her Heart Hub to improve education and treatment of cardiovascular disease in women.

## Maternal, sexual and reproductive health

Women experience specific sexual and reproductive health issues over their lifetime, including those related to menstruation, fertility and . Many women also have distinct health needs and challenges during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period.

### Endometriosis and pelvic pain

The Government is continuing to invest in improving Australia's understanding and management of **endometriosis**, a condition where tissue that behaves like the lining of the uterus grows in locations outside the uterus, causing 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. Women affected by endometriosis often experience a reduced quality of life, diminished ability to participate in education, work and sporting activities, and adverse impacts on fertility. There is currently no cure. Women with undiagnosed endometriosis may have difficulty falling pregnant without in-vitro fertilisation (IVF).

In 2018, the Government released the *National Action Plan for Endometriosis*, under which funding has gone towards awareness and education (\$5.77 million); clinical management and care (\$0.67 million); and research (\$16.07 million).

### Fertility

Approximately one in nine Australian couples of reproductive age experience fertility problems, which can be extremely confronting and traumatic. Infertility can affect either partner, with around 40 per cent of problems relating to women's fertility and a similar proportion in men. Sometimes the issue is due to a combination of factors, or no cause can be identified.

In 2020-21, the Government spent \$324 million through Medicare to subsidise the cost of **assisted reproductive technologies (ART)**, including IVF, to assist approximately 50,000 Australians experiencing medical infertility. In addition to this investment, on 1 November 2021 the Government introduced a new Medicare subsidy for Pre-implantation Genetic Testing services, which can help at-risk individuals or couples using IVF to avoid passing serious genetic disorders, such as cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy, onto their child.

## Maternal health

Under the 2019 *Women-centred care: Strategic directions for Australian maternity services (Woman-centred Care Strategy)*, the Government supports the states and territories, and the private sector, to provide maternity services for mothers and their babies. Support is provided through the funding contributions to public hospital services, Medicare services, and private health insurance rebates to support choice for people to use private maternity health services.

The Government also funds **Pregnancy, Birth and Baby**, a national helpline, video and website service which provides support and information to expecting parents, parents, families and carers of children aged up to five years. The website recorded over 18.5 million website sessions and the helpline handled over 38,000 calls in 2020-21. The service is expected to handle over 46,000 calls in 2022-23, with \$4.75 million being provided for the service in 2022-23 to handle an increase in demand.

To increase awareness of the risks associated with alcohol consumption during pregnancy and breastfeeding, the Government is investing \$27.4 million over six years from 2019-20 to 2024-25 in the **National Awareness Campaign for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Women**. The campaign, which was launched in November 2021, also aims to reduce the incidence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder by supporting and informing women so they can make healthy choices while planning and during a pregnancy.

## Stillbirth prevention and bereavement support

Australia is one of the safest places in the world for a baby to be born. However, approximately 2,000 families lose a baby to stillbirth every year, around 110,000 Australians have a miscarriage and 600 lose their baby in the first 28 days after birth. An estimated 70 per cent of women will experience grief-related depressive symptoms at clinically significant levels one year after stillbirth.

In December 2020, the Government launched the first *National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan* to strategically address the issue of stillbirth in Australia and provided \$11 million in funding to implement the plan, including to support stillbirth education and awareness initiatives for groups at higher risk of stillbirth. In the 2021-22 Budget, the Government provided a further \$1.8 million in funding to increase the number of stillbirth autopsies and investigations.

### New initiatives

The Government is investing in a range of maternal, sexual and reproductive health measures in line with the Strategy, the National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan and the National Action Plan for Endometriosis.

This includes \$81.2 million over four years for **genetic testing** for cystic fibrosis, spinal muscular atrophy and fragile X syndrome to help couples understand and assess the risk of passing on significant genetic conditions to their child and to plan their pregnancy appropriately.

The Government is also investing \$58.3 million to **improve the treatment, management and diagnosis of endometriosis**.

Key investments include:

- \$25.5 million over four years from 2022-23 to support women who are having difficulty conceiving to access a new Medicare funded Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan. This service will be available to women with severe endometriosis and other conditions that affect fertility.
- \$16.4 million over four years from 2022-23 to support the establishment of endometriosis and pelvic pain GP clinics in primary care settings, improving access to diagnostic, treatment and other support services for women with endometriosis and other conditions resulting in pelvic pain.
- \$5.1 million over three years from 2022-23 to support the development of an Endometriosis Management Plan to be used in primary care settings to support patients, which will complement the establishment of endometriosis and pelvic pain GP clinics as well as support GP and nurse education.
- \$5.1 million over four years from 2022-23 to continue to support endometriosis research through the National Endometriosis Clinical and Scientific Trials Network.

The Government is providing \$23 million over four years to support families who have experienced stillbirth or miscarriage and to respond to the National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan. This includes \$5.1 million to establish a new grant program for bereavement support, resources and education, and \$4.2 million for the continuation of the Hospital to Home program.

Changes are also being made to the Medicare Benefits Schedule to support women's health. The Government will invest \$21.4 million over four years from 2022-23 for **new and amended items relating to obstetrics and gynaecology** services to improve health outcomes for pregnant women.

## Older women

Women in Australia live longer than men. In 2020-21, women comprised almost two-thirds of people in aged care, including residential care, home care and home support. The Government is committed to providing the best possible care to older Australians, including women, and will invest a record \$30.1 billion in the aged care system in 2022-23. The Government has invested more than \$19.6 billion in additional funding in the system since the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established in 2018.

### Key ongoing investments

As part of its ongoing investment in the aged care system, in the 2021-22 Budget the Government invested \$6.5 billion in 80,000 additional **Home Care Packages**, which support older Australians to continue to live independently. As of 29 March 2022, 30,000 of the 80,000 packages have been released of which around 18,000 went to women.

On 1 October 2022, the **Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) funding model** for residential aged care will be implemented. This is a significant reform that will drive better care and establish a more sustainable, efficient and transparent system. AN-ACC includes a \$3.9 billion funding boost for residential aged care providers, to enable them to increase the care time for residents to an average of 200 minutes per resident per day, including 40 minutes of Registered Nurse time, and a requirement to have a registered nurse on site 16 hours per day.

Between 2018 and 2024 the Government will invest \$116.7 million into the aged care **Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS)**. On 1 April 2021, the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) in residential aged care and flexible care delivered in a residential aged care setting commenced. Under the SIRS, aged care providers are required to report on a broader range of incidents to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) including a range of new matters such as sexual misconduct, neglect, psychological abuse, and inappropriate use of restrictive practices. Significantly, the SIRS lifted the previous exemption on the reporting of resident-on-resident incidents, where the perpetrator has an assessed cognitive impairment.

The SIRS will drive quality and focus on the safety and wellbeing of not only women but all aged care recipients at the individual service and broader system level by expanding the responsibilities of residential aged care providers to identify, record, manage and resolve incidents, ensuring measures are in place to prevent similar incidents occurring.

From 1 July 2022, the SIRS will also be expanded to in-home aged care services. This will provide extra protections to older Australians receiving aged care services in their homes and in the community.

### **Supporting the aged care workforce**

In 2021, the **Aged Care Transition to Practice program** commenced to increase the availability of Registered Nurses with experience and training in aged care. As at 1 February 2022, 191 graduate registered nurses have commenced the program, which will provide mentoring and specialised training, ensuring these nurses provide high quality care to senior Australians.

At MYEFO, the Aged Care Registered Nurses' payment initiative was expanded to include a 6-month half payment, for registered nurses who begin working in aged care by 1 May 2022. Nurses who work at the same aged care provider for a 6 or 12 month eligibility period will be eligible for a payment of up to \$3,700. An additional payment of up to \$2,300 will be available to nurses who have a postgraduate degree, work in a rural or remote location, or undertake training responsibilities that go above and beyond their regular duties. The first eligibility period commenced in November 2021, with the first payments to be made in November 2022.

As announced on 1 February 2022, the Government is providing \$215.3 million over two years from 2021-22 for an **aged care workforce bonus** to support the aged care workforce to continue to care for older Australians during the COVID 19 pandemic. The bonus of up to \$800 will be paid to eligible aged care staff in government subsidised home care and residential care. It is anticipated 265,000 workers will benefit.

## Priority populations experiencing health inequities

Acknowledging the unique needs of different populations is critical to reducing inequities in health outcomes not only between men and women, but between different groups of women and girls. Addressing inequities in health care is a key focus of the Strategy.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

There have been improvements in the lives and health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls in Australia over the past decade, with a reduction in smoking and alcohol consumption, and in death rates from some cancers. However, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women continue to experience disadvantage, lower access to quality health care and poorer health outcomes than non-Indigenous women.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and their babies disproportionately experience adverse perinatal outcomes compared with non-Indigenous mothers and babies, including:

- increased maternal mortality (13.8 vs 6.6 deaths per 100,000 women who gave birth in 2008-2012) (AIHW, 2015)
- higher likelihood of babies born of a low birthweight (118 vs 62 per 1,000 births) (AIHW, 2016)
- higher preterm births (140 vs 80 per 1,000 births) (AIHW, 2016)
- lower rates of exclusive breastfeeding and breastfeeding continuation (AIHW 2011)
- twice the likelihood of stillbirth (AIHW, 2019)
- 2.1 times the rate of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (AIHW, 2020).

The Government is committed to improving these health outcomes. As part of the first Commonwealth Implementation Plan under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Government is providing an additional \$45 million over four years to 2024-25 to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies through the **Healthy Mums, Healthy Bubs package**. The package will expand the **Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program** to a further 2 sites (to a total of 15 sites) and will support promising models of culturally safe antenatal and midwifery care, including Birthing on Country models.

## Women living in rural and remote communities

Women and girls from rural and remote areas are a key priority population identified in the Strategy. They have poorer health outcomes than those in urban areas, with greater health risk factors and poorer access to, and use of, health services.

Through key Budget measures, including the 2018-19 Stronger Rural Health Strategy, the Government has invested in foundational reform to better support the supply, distribution and quality of our rural health workforce. While a lot has been achieved, there are still significant challenges in resolving rural health workforce and service shortages in many areas, particularly maternity, which have been exacerbated during the pandemic by crystallizing retirement decisions of a senior rural GP workforce and significantly reduced capacity to recruit health workers from overseas.

Throughout the COVID-19 response, MBS telehealth items have helped maintain access to essential health care services for people across Australia. Ongoing telehealth changes to Medicare build upon longstanding access to specialist video conferencing in regional and remote areas, with the addition of telephone consultations and primary care telehealth services particularly welcomed by people in regional, rural and remote Australia. In addition, temporary telephone services introduced in July 2021 have been extended to 30 June 2023 to support access to GP services including for sexual and reproductive health.

### New initiatives

The Government is investing \$4.2 million over four years from 2022-23 to fund **community-led initiatives and organisations** to support women and girls at higher risk of poorer health outcomes, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, migrant and refugee women, older women and women with disabilities.

The Government will support community-led approaches to the **prevention of female genital mutilation or cutting** with a \$1.7 million investment over three years from 2022-23. The initiative will also support health workforce training to address the health impacts of these harmful practices.

## Chronic conditions and preventive health

Women are more likely than men to experience chronic health conditions, with almost 50 per cent of Australian women reporting having at least one condition.<sup>57</sup> Common conditions include cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and arthritis.

### Cardiovascular disease

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a leading cause of illness, disease burden and death among Australian women. There are important differences between women and men in risk factors for CVD, in symptoms, and in treatment and outcomes.<sup>58</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are up to twice as likely as non-Indigenous women to have CVD, and to die from coronary heart disease or stroke.<sup>59</sup>

The National Heart Foundation of Australia, with support from the Stroke Foundation, developed the *National Strategic Action Plan for Heart Disease and Stroke* (Heart Disease and Stroke Action Plan), which was released in September 2021. The Heart Disease and Stroke Action Plan was agreed by all state and territory governments. It complements and builds on existing frameworks for heart disease and stroke in Australia. It reflects priorities and immediately achievable actions that can be implemented, to reduce the impact of heart disease and stroke on individuals, families, the community, and the health care system.

The Government has committed \$4 million over four years from 2019-20 to implement actions under the Heart Disease and Stroke Action Plan. These initiatives include: early detection of heart disease and stroke through promotion of Heart Health Checks and the F.A.S.T. (FACE ARMS SPEECH TIME) message; updating the 2012 cardiovascular risk guidelines, and support for recovery from heart disease and stroke.

### Cervical, ovarian and breast cancer

Improved rates of breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening for under-screened populations is a measure of success of the Strategy. Increased access to cancer screening and immunisation programs is a key action, recognising the success of these measures in reducing the impact of cervical and breast cancer in Australian women. Cancer screening services are an important national priority with participants of all national screening services experiencing lower mortality rates. However, national cancer screening services have been impacted by COVID-19. Unlike screening for bowel cancer, where samples can be collected at home, there are no alternative at-home screening tests

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57 AIHW (2019) *The Health of Australia's Females*

58 AIHW (2019) *Cardiovascular Disease in Women*

59 AIHW (2021) *Heart Stroke and Vascular Diseases*

for mammograms. There have been marked decreases in breast and cervical cancer screening at different points during COVID-19.<sup>60</sup>

Cervical cancer is a preventable and treatable form of cancer if detected early. The National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) screens for and detects Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) which accounts for up to 90 per cent of cervical cancers. Since 1991 there has been a 50 per cent reduction in cervical cancer incidence and mortality in Australia.

There were nearly 3.8 million cervical screening participants aged 25-74 between 2018 and 2020, estimated to be 56 per cent of the eligible population.<sup>61</sup>

From 1 July 2022 the NCSP will expand screening test options, with the introduction of 2 new MBS items (cost of \$2.2 million over 4 years) offering self-collection of vaginal samples as a choice to all eligible people aged 25-74 years old. This removes a significant cultural and personal barrier that may discourage participation in screening for some people.

In 2021, breast cancer was estimated to be the most diagnosed cancer in Australia for men or women. With an overall incidence of 130 people per 100,000 females in the population.<sup>62</sup> The Government has effective screening and early detection programs through BreastScreen Australia. Australian women who have a cancer detected through BreastScreen Australia have a 54 per cent to 63 per cent lower risk of dying compared to eligible women who have not been screened.<sup>63</sup> In the two-year period 2018–2019, more than 1.8 million women aged 50–74 participated in BreastScreen Australia, a participation rate of 55 per cent.<sup>64</sup>

With the addition of women aged 70–74 to the target age group for screening, the number of women screening in this age group increased substantially, from 97,957 (25.9 per cent) in 2011-12 to 297,647 (56.3 per cent) in 2018-19.

From 1 November 2022, an existing MBS item for MRI of the breast for patients at high risk of developing breast cancer, will be amended to expand access for women up until the age of 60 (from 50) at a cost of \$10.3 million over four years. This will enable more women who are at high risk of breast cancer but have no symptoms to access a MRI scan to check for breast cancer every year up until the age of 60. From age 60, these women can continue to have mammograms.

In addition to significant investments in breast cancer treatment and prevention, the Government has recognised the importance of supporting women suffering from this

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60 AIHW (2020) Cancer screening and COVID-19 in Australia

61 AIHW (2021) National Cervical Screening Program monitoring report

62 AIHW (2021) Cancer data in Australia

63 AIHW (2021) Cancer in Australia

64 AIHW (2021) Cancer in Australia

disease and has invested \$6.6 million over 3 years to enhance the patient support and information services of Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA). This funding will support BCNA to operate its helpline, conduct information forums and consumer representative training to support people diagnosed with breast cancer, with a particular focus on women in rural, regional and remote areas.

The Government's commitment to provide access to new treatments through the PBS was recently reinforced by the expanded PBS listing of the medicine Verzenio® (abemaciclib), for use in combination with fulvestrant for the treatment of patients with a type of non-premenopausal breast cancer. Without this important subsidy, patients may pay around \$80,000 per course of treatment. The listing was updated on the PBS from 1 November 2021.

### New initiatives

The Government is investing \$84.8 million in a range of initiatives to prevent chronic illness and improve health and wellbeing among Australian women and girls. Funding includes:

- \$39.8 million over three years from 2023-24 for the **McGrath Foundation** to continue and expand the Breast Care Nurses Program which delivers specialist nursing support to breast cancer patients. The measure will increase the number of Commonwealth-funded nurses from 102 to 114 by 2025-26.
- \$10.6 million over four years from 2022-23 to expand eligibility under Medicare for MRI services relating to the diagnosis of breast cancer.
- \$4.0 million over four years from 2022-23 to continue support of **Ovarian Cancer Australia's Teal Support Program** which provides a free telehealth service supporting women with ovarian cancer.
- \$0.5 million over three years from 2022-23 to improve education and treatment of cardiovascular disease in women to enable continuation of the **Her Heart Hub website**.

The Government is also investing in initiatives to **address the decline in testing and screening services** which occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. These investments include \$20.2 million over 3 years from 2022-23 for services relating to cervical cancer and \$9.7 million over 2 years from 2022-23 for short term surge capacity for BreastScreen Australia.

From 1 May 2022, the Government will **subsidise the cost of Trodelvy® (sacituzumab govitecan), a drug for the treatment of triple negative breast cancer**, through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), benefiting around 580 patients each year. Without the subsidy, patients may pay over \$80,000 per course of treatment.

## Supporting mental health

The Government is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Australian women and girls. It is estimated that one in six women in Australia will experience depression and one in three will experience anxiety during their lifetime.<sup>65</sup>

### Protecting the mental health of young Australians

The Government has made significant investments in protecting the mental health of young Australians, including young Australian women. This includes a range of mental health services aimed at addressing the mental health needs of young Australians including youth specific digital and face-to-face programs.

headspace is the Government's flagship program for provision of services to young people aged 12-25 experiencing, or at risk of, mild to moderate mental illness. As of 2 March 2022, there were 145 headspace services operating nationally, including 77 headspace services located across regional Australia. These services in particular support young Australian women. In 2020-21, almost 65 per cent of young people accessing headspace centres and 78 per cent using headspace services were female.

### Greater support for addressing eating disorders

Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, are serious, complex and life-threatening conditions, with some of the highest mortality rates of any mental health disorder. Approximately four per cent of the Australian population is currently experiencing an eating disorder, a majority of whom are women.

The Government has delivered significant support for eating disorder support and treatment. From 1 November 2019, Australians with severe eating disorders have been able to access, for the first time, treatment plans through Medicare, with patients eligible to receive 40 subsidised psychological services and 20 dietetic services each year. Between 1 November 2019 and 28 February 2022, this support was accessed by 29,220 patients. The Government has also invested \$63 million to establish six new residential eating disorder treatment centres.

The Government is also supporting critical research into eating disorders through the **Australian Eating Disorder Research and Translation Strategy 2021–2031**, launched in September 2021. As a result of the Eating Disorder Strategy, the Government has committed \$13 million over three years to 2024-25 to establish a **National Eating Disorder Research Centre**, which is being led by the University of Sydney's InsideOut Institute.

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<sup>65</sup> ABS, *National Health Survey*, 2017-18 financial year.

## Perinatal mental health support

The Government is investing \$118.3 million (announced since 2019-20) to support the mental health and wellbeing of expectant and new parents affected by, or at risk of, perinatal mental illness, or experiencing grief after miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. This includes \$43.9 million to improve the range of perinatal mental health and wellbeing services available, including funding for Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia's (PANDA) National Perinatal Mental Health Helpline. It also includes \$47.4 million to support digital perinatal mental health screening and improve national data collection.

### New initiatives

The Government is investing \$24.3 million over four years from 2022-23 to implement a pilot program to identify innovative and evidence-based models of care to best **address the needs of people with eating disorders** and continue to fund existing treatment and support services. This initiative builds on the Government's record \$2.3 billion investment in 2021-22 through the *National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan*.

## Increasing the women's health evidence base

The Government is committed to the health and wellbeing of women and girls at all life stages. The Strategy recognises the importance of ongoing research and evaluation of implemented measures against the Strategy. The Government is committed to expanding the evidence base supporting women's health in Australia. Monitoring and reporting over the life of the Strategy, and sustained momentum of research will accelerate positive health outcomes for women and ensure that further initiatives improving women's health are based on the best available evidence.

Since its inception in 2015, the Government has invested \$171.2 million into women's health research through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). Research has included a focus on better treatment and support for women with metastatic breast cancer, for other high risk female reproductive tract cancers such as endometrial cancer and ovarian cancer. Since 2000, the Government, through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), has also provided \$1.4 billion of investment into women's health research, including for endometriosis research to improve quality of life, identification of early risk factors and improving clinical care.

### New initiatives

The Government is investing in several initiatives to increase the women's health evidence base. These investments include:

- \$1.6 million over four years from 2022-23 to fund the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to **establish a National Advisory Council for Women's Health** to evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Strategy. The Council will bring together representatives of key women's health organisations, including the voices of consumers and priority populations.
- \$1.6 million over three years from 2022-23 for the extension a second wave of the **Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health – Mothers and their Children's Health (MatCH) survey** for 2022. The survey will collect time sensitive data on the development of the children from the original 2015 study who are now aged 12-19 years, including the adolescent experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data will complement the longitudinal maternal health data obtained through the Longitudinal Study which holds more than 25 years of data on 57,000 Australian women.

## Health impacts of violence against women and girls

Family, domestic and sexual violence has a profound and long-term effect on the health and wellbeing of families, communities and society. Intimate partner violence contributes to more death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 than any other preventable risk factor.<sup>66</sup>

Health services play an important part in addressing family, domestic and sexual violence. They are often the first and preferred point of contact for victim-survivors. Announced as part of the 2019-20 Budget, the **Improving Health System Responses to Family and Domestic Violence** measure totalling \$9.5 million over four years focuses on primary care as general practitioners are often the first point of contact in the health care system for a person experiencing family and domestic violence.

Through this funding, the Brisbane South Primary Health Network (PHN) expanded its *Recognise, Respond and Refer* (RRR) program to provide full coverage across the Brisbane South PHN region. The RRR program aims to improve the ability of the primary care workforce to identify and respond to patients experiencing violence. This Government funding also supported the health system navigation model of identification, response and referral activities to be developed and piloted in five additional PHNs in response to local needs, including an independent evaluation. As part of this measure, the Government also provided funding to develop and deliver training and evidence-based best practice guidance to GPs and primary health care workers nationally. These investments complement the Government's continued commitment to women's safety. As outlined in this Statement, funding of over \$140 million for health responses and trauma recovery is being provided to support the next *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*, including:

- \$48.7 million over 4 years to support victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence and child sex abuse to navigate the health system. This funding will expand the existing Family and Domestic Violence Primary Health Network pilot and establish a pilot in each state and territory to prevent and respond to child sex abuse; to provide increased support to primary care providers to assist in the early identification and intervention of family, domestic and sexual violence and child sex abuse, and ensure coordinated referrals to support services.
- \$67.2 million over 4 years to pilot a new national model of care, delivered through Primary Health Networks, for improved coordination and access to trauma-informed recovery services for people who have experienced family, domestic or sexual violence.
- \$25 million over 5 years for the Illawarra Women's Centre to support the establishment of a women's trauma recovery centre.

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66 AIHW (2018) Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia