



AUSTRALIAN GENDER
EQUALITY COUNCIL

working for balance

How did the 2021-2022 Budget Measure up against AGECE's Gender Equality Manifesto?

"NEEDS IMPROVEMENT"

The 2021-2022 Budget took some important steps to recognise the issues facing women in Australia today, but was a missed opportunity for significant structural and economic reform to achieve a gender-equal society.

We know the women's Budget initiatives were quickly cobbled together to respond to the government's newfound realisation of the urgency of issues around women's safety, economic security and health and wellbeing.

Re-introduction of the Women's Budget Statement is welcomed and must be retained, to provide an evidence-based account of the issues faced by Australian women today and improved transparency of funding.

The key women's initiatives in the Budget are also welcomed but do not go far enough, are unlikely to provide the long term structural change needed to achieve gender equality.

And a \$3.4 billion investment towards women is less than 1% of overall budget, far short of what it could and should be.

Key take-outs from the Budget – positive and negative

✓ Women's Budget Statement reintroduced	✗ Childcare subsidy changes marginal and introduction delayed until 2022
✓ \$1.7billion in childcare subsidy enhancements	✗ No major strategy or structural reforms to barriers facing working women
✓ \$1.6billion towards state funding of early childhood learning	✗ No pathway to universal childcare or early childhood learning
✓ \$1 billion to support victims of family, domestic and sexual violence expanding some programs	✗ Minimal STEM education programs for girls in primary school
✓ \$351.6 million for initiatives related to Women's health	✗ No strategy to eliminate gender stereotypes
✓ Increased funding for aged care	✗ Male-dominated industries the focus of stimulus funding
✓ Support for 55 <i>respect@work</i> Report recommendations	✗ No changes to paid parental leave

It is clear there remains a significant opportunity for the government to undertake a more strategic review of its approach, and provide a real vision for the future of gender equality in Australia.

And the Australian Gender Equality Council can help it get there.



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Missed opportunities to consider for next time

- Setting measurable targeted outcomes in key areas of women's economic security, safety, and equality.
- The Women's Budget Statement to report year-on-year funding changes and transparently measure spend and outcomes.
- Structural reform initiatives to increase women's workforce participation and eliminate the gender pay gap.
- Paid parental leave reform to eliminate gender bias ("use it or lose it") and loss of superannuation during parental leave.
- Setting a roadmap to a comprehensive system of universal childcare and early childhood learning.
- Assistance for women experiencing violence to be supported to stay at home or seeking safe accommodation.
- Investment in primary prevention initiatives to address the root causes of violence against women and children.
- Initiatives to increase women's representation in government including targets for the representation of women at all levels of government.
- Broadening the Women in STEM Strategy to increase the focus on primary school and early childhood learning to shift entrenched gender biases in the career preferences of boys and girls.
- Strategic and material investment in programs that aim to eliminate entrenched gender stereotypes leveraging international best practice.
- Investment in programs to increase women's participation in sport and tying Australia's sports-related funding to achievement of gender targets.
- Expand the scope of WGEA Act reporting to government agencies and introduce penalties for non-compliance with the Act's reporting requirements, and incentives for high performers.
- Expand the Office of Women to support and co-ordinate the multiple Ministries that have responsibilities relating to women and ensure a holistic and strategic approach to the issues, including measurement and reporting across various portfolios.

To view our detailed analysis of the budget against each of the dimensions of AGEQ's Gender Equality Manifesto click [here](#).