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Calls for structural change to budget are building as women are left behind

Following last Tuesday's budget announcement, there is a growing consensus that the federal budget needs fundamental change. Seventeen organisations have come together to call for a new approach to budgeting which will bring women's needs into sharper focus.

"The Minister for Women, Marise Payne, has made it clear that she understands that women will play a vital role in this recovery and the measures outlined in the Women's Economic Security Statement are a strong first step in that direction," said Helen Dalley-Fisher, Senior Manager of the Equality Rights Alliance. "It's therefore concerning that the rest of the budget failed to address the key structural issues facing women. It's become clear that the budget process itself is one of the barriers we have to address."

The job of confronting the bias in the budget has been made a little easier by a recognition of the need for more robust data about women's lives. "It was pleasing to see that there will be a revision and enhancement of the ABS' Gender Indicators report," said Trish Bergin of the 50/50 by 2030 Foundation. "Gender relevant data is essential as a building block towards understanding the gender impact of both current and prospective policy changes".

However, despite widespread calls for investment in social housing from economists, housing specialists and women's groups, the budget didn't address Australia's dire lack of affordable housing. "We have known for years that Australia is experiencing a housing affordability crisis, with older women the fastest growing group experiencing homelessness," said Emma Davidson of the Women's Electoral Lobby. "Building more social housing would help with the rising tide of homelessness, while also creating jobs."

Another area which needed but failed to get urgent attention in this budget was childcare. Chief Executive Women President, Sue Morphet, said "Increasing female full-time workforce participation is one of Australia's biggest economic opportunities; and making early childhood education and care more affordable is one of the most effective policy levers to do that. This is not welfare; it is investment in the infrastructure women need to participate more fully in the workforce and maximise their productivity and opportunities."

"With soaring rates of all forms of violence against women and their children, it is vital that we fund long-term solutions and building a future free from violence for people in Australia" said Tina Dixon, Acting Program Manager of the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance. "The COVID-19 pandemic has not only increased the prevalence of violence but created additional barriers for women to seek safety. Without gender responsive budgeting and commitment to ending violence against women we risk losing lives".

The Aid budget saw a slight increase for gender equality initiatives but at just 32 per cent of overseas development assistance it falls far short of what's needed. "Women worldwide are experiencing the worst impacts of the economic and health crises brought on by COVID-19, yet the Government continues to make cuts to the Aid budget in regions where women face persistent gender inequality, alongside the growing impacts of the pandemic," said Michelle Higelin, Executive Director of global women's rights organisation ActionAid Australia. "At a

time when gender equality is deteriorating worldwide at an alarming pace, Australia's leadership is vital to address the disproportionate impact this pandemic is having on women and support women leading local responses."

"It's time for us to join the majority of nations in the OECD and work towards a budget that is truly gender responsive," said Helen Dalley-Fisher. "We need a budget and policy process that makes it possible for policy makers to see and address the needs of women."

For media comment or speakers for interview, please contact:

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Endorsing organisations



50/50 By 2030 Foundation is a gender equality initiative established within the University of Canberra. The vision of the Foundation is singular and uncompromising: By the year 2030 women will be equally represented in leadership and key decision-making roles at all levels of government and public administration throughout Australia, and across our region. Backed by world class research expertise, the Foundation develops evidence-based theory and public policy recommendations on the role of women in strengthening public administration and improving governance and national wellbeing. In short, we ***activate research on gender to achieve lasting change in gender equality***. We work in partnership and collaboration, and aim to build and expand the prevailing discourse around women, power and public leadership.

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Action Aid is a global women's rights organisation supporting women living in poverty and exclusion around the world to stand up against injustice and claim their rights, with a focus on economic justice, climate justice and women's rights in emergencies.



Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) is one of six National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government. AWAVA's focus is addressing all forms of violence against women, to 'ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse'. AWAVA ensures that women's voices, particularly marginalised women's voices, are heard by Government, harnessing and amplifying the work of its member organisations, Friends & Supporters.



Chief Executive Women

Women Leaders Enabling Women Leaders

Founded in 1985, Chief Executive Women (CEW) now represents over 650 of Australia's most senior and distinguished women leaders across business, academia, government, the arts and not-for-profit sectors. Our shared mission is 'women leaders enabling other women leaders'. We strive to educate and influence all levels of Australian business and government on the importance of gender balance. Through advocacy, targeted programs and scholarships, CEW works to remove the barriers to women's progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity. CEW's members work actively to realise our vision of a community where women and men have equal economic and social choices and responsibilities.



Equality Rights Alliance

Women's Voices for Gender Equality

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) is Australia's largest network advocating for women's equality, women's leadership and recognition of women's diversity. We bring together 64 non-government organisations and social enterprises with a focus on the impact of policy or service delivery on women. We are one of six National Women's Alliances, and are funded by the Commonwealth Government's Office for Women and auspiced by YWCA Australia



Gender Equity Victoria (GenVic) is the peak organisation for gender equity, women's health and the prevention of gendered violence in Victoria. It leads, advocates and enables gender equity activity across the state, listening to and supporting individuals and organisations across a growing, vibrant gender equity industry. Our aim is for equality, wellbeing, and freedom from violence for every woman and girl in every community of Victoria.



International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) is the leading Australian agency entirely focussed on women's rights and gender equality in the Asia Pacific region. We are international, feminist and independent. Our vision is gender equality for all, and our purpose is to advance and protect the rights of diverse women and girls.



Marie Stopes Australia - as an independent, non-profit organisation, Marie Stopes Australia is Australia's only national accredited provider of abortion, contraception and vasectomy services, and the country's longest running provider of teleabortion.

Our holistic, client-centred approach empowers individuals to lead their own reproductive healthcare safely, and with dignity, regardless of their circumstances. Through active partnerships with healthcare providers, researchers and communities, our models of care ensure the total wellbeing of our clients is supported at every stage.



National Council of Jewish Women of Australia is a Jewish feminist organisation committed to promoting social justice and the rights of women in all aspects of their lives. At a National level we do this through advocacy, education and community building. At a Section level, we promote social justice through education, programs of empowerment and community service. We are concerned to address the oppression of women; to promote women within Judaism and the Jewish community; to empower all women, including Jewish women, within the wider Australian community; and to promote the position of women in Israel. We are guided by, and seek to ensure the continuity of, Jewish values - in particular the primacy and inviolability of human life, the obligation of justice (Tzedakah) and the commitment to repair the work (Tikkun Olam).



The National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW) is dedicated to promoting and protecting the interests of Australian women, including intellectual, cultural, political, social, economic, legal, industrial and domestic spheres, and ensuring that the aims and ideals of the women's movement and its collective wisdom are handed on to new generations of women.



The Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise (TAASE) is an interdisciplinary research alliance within University of South Australia Business. Our focus is working with marginalised communities and vulnerable people as experts in their own lives to ensure that decisions affecting people's lives draw on their stories, their strengths, and their capacity to realise their potential. TAASE researchers work across a range of areas: homelessness, housing, domestic and family violence, ageing, regional and community development and social policy broadly. Key researchers in the homelessness field based with TAASE are Dr Selina Tually and Dr Debbie Faulkner, who have decades of experience in homelessness research and research to practice translation, especially related to older people and rough sleeping. For more information please see: <https://www.unisa.edu.au/research/taase/>



The Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition RWC works with multicultural women to build their capacity and advocate for themselves by raising their voices. We want to see women advocating, championing and being heard in all the issues that, in any matter, affect them. We are here to provide a better space for multicultural women and for that, we must work, talk, learn and be visible together.



Women's Electoral Lobby Australia (WEL) is a national, independent, non-party political, feminist lobby group that for 45 years has worked tirelessly to improve the position of women in society. We lobby politicians, unions, employers, educationalists and other institutions on policies that promote equality and seek to change attitudes and practices that discriminate against women. WEL is dedicated to creating a society where women's participation and their ability to fulfil their potential are unrestricted, acknowledged and respected and where women and men share equally in society's responsibilities and rewards.



Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) is a national network of community legal centres specialising in women's legal issues, which work to support, represent and advocate for women to achieve justice in the legal system. We seek to promote a legal system that is safe, supportive, non-discriminatory and responsive to the needs of women. Some of our centres have been operating for over 35 years.



Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the award winning, national Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) for women and girls with all types of disability in Australia. The key purpose of WWDA is to promote and advance the human rights and freedoms of women and girls with disability. Our goal is to be a national voice for the rights of women and girls with disability and a national force to improve the lives and life chances of women and girls with disability. WWDA represents more than two million disabled women and girls in Australia, has affiliate organisations and networks of women with disability in most States and Territories of Australia, and is internationally recognised for our global leadership in advancing the human rights of women and girls with disability. As a DPO, WWDA is managed and run by women with disability, for women and girls with disability. WWDA is a

founding member of [Disabled People's Organisations Australia](#) (DPO Australia) along with First People's Disability Network Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance, and People with Disability Australia.



YWCA CANBERRA

YWCA Canberra is a feminist not-for-profit organisation that has provided community services and represented women's issues in Canberra since 1929. Our mission is 'We strengthen communities by supporting girls and women through our services and advocacy' and our vision is 'Girls and women thriving'. We provide essential, quality services for women, girls and families in the ACT and surrounding regions. We work in the areas of children's services, community development, homelessness and affordable housing, youth services, personal and professional training, women's leadership and advocacy.



Zonta International is a leading global organisation of professionals empowering women worldwide through service and advocacy. Zonta International and our members work at the international, national and local levels to realize our vision of a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential, where women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men, and where no woman lives in fear of violence. Zonta District 24 covers NSW and the ACT