



MEDIA RELEASE
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Budget 2023-24

For women, this budget has its heart in all the right places

Australia's largest alliance of women's organisations, the [Equality Rights Alliance](#) (ERA), has congratulated the Government on its 2023-24 Budget.

Helen Dalley-Fisher, ERA Convenor, said "This budget is a move in the right direction for women – it has its heart in all the right places. This Government seems to understand that we need deep structural change to our economic and policy systems to make real change for women. Although there is much more that could be done, we're not seeing anything tonight which moves in the wrong direction."

"This budget hasn't solved gendered poverty or achieved gender equality, and there are many areas where lots more work will be needed, such as reform of superannuation to reflect the impact of women's unpaid work and further reforms to support wage revaluing in women-dominated sectors. We also want to see a greater awareness of the impact of climate change on women and girls and the phasing out of the activity test for childcare subsidy."

"However, this budget is tracing a trajectory towards a more resilient economy which will be weaned off its current unsustainable dependence on women's unpaid work and our undervalued care sectors," said Ms Dalley-Fisher.

ERA also congratulates the Government on the end of the ParentsNext program. "The scrapping of this damaging program is long overdue and contains an implicit recognition of the essential work performed by single mums in raising kids. We look forward to the development of a replacement scheme which is voluntary and designed through strong consultation with single Mums." Said Ms Dalley-Fisher. "The expansion of eligibility for Parenting Payment is also strongly welcomed, she added. "This vulnerable group of parents have been demonised for too long. It's time we supported them in their undervalued care work."

The continued commitment to Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is an important element of tonight's budget, because it will give insight into the effect of program

spending on women and gender equality in Australia. “We can’t know whether policy will be effective unless we know how it will affect women and girls. Without GRB, we’re flying blind on policy development;” said Ms Dalley-Fisher. “Similarly, the emphasis in the budget on improving access to gender disaggregated data is a vital step towards sustainable and responsible policy development.”

“Single women are the majority of rent assistance recipients,¹ so the CRA increases in the budget are helpful, but the CRA program is in urgent need of an overhaul – we recommend a review of the program to ensure it is primarily directed at those facing the highest levels of housing stress,” said Ms Dalley-Fisher. “We also urgently need to see a strong gender focus in the National Housing Plan. We welcome the expansion of the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council and recommend that one of the three new experts has a focus on gender and housing.”

Unsurprisingly, there is considerable work still to be done. “ERA looks forward to the release of the *National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality* later this year. This Strategy is a major missing piece of the gender equality puzzle and an opportunity to build on the early steps taken in this budget,” said Ms Dalley-Fisher.

ENDS

For more information and interviews, please contact Helen Dalley-Fisher on 0413 065 822.

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) is Australia’s largest network of organisations advocating for women’s economic security, women’s leadership and recognition of women’s diversity. We bring together 67 organisations with an interest in advancing gender equality at the national level. You can find more information about us and our work at www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au or on Twitter: @eraaustralia.

Further Information: Poverty in Australia is a gendered issue

In Australia, a majority of individuals in poverty (including children) are women or girls (52.9%).²

Women are more likely to live in households below the poverty line than men (14.1% for women and 13.1% for men).³

¹ Commonwealth Rent Assistance 2018 data commissioned from Department of Social Services for the Equality Rights Alliance (2020). *Equality Rights Alliance National Plan on Gender Equality 2020*

² ACOSS / UNSW *Poverty and Inequality 2020*

³ ACOSS *ibid*

Children in sole parent families are 3 times more likely to live in poverty than children in couple families⁴ and 79.8% of single parents are women⁵

Australia's gender pay gap is 22.8%. Women, on average earn, \$26,596 less than men each year. ⁶

Men are twice as likely to be in the top earning bracket and women are 1.5 times more likely to be in the lowest.⁷

Women approaching retirement have 23.1 per cent less superannuation than men of the same age.⁸

Mothers get a 55% drop in earnings for the mother in the 5 years following childbirth, while men's remains unchanged.⁹

Women of all ages spend 9 hours a week more than men on unpaid work and care.¹⁰

⁴ ACOSS ibid

⁵ Torrens University PHIDU based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, August 2021
<https://phidu.torrens.edu.au/notes-on-the-data/demographic-social/single-parent-families#:~:text=Policy%20context%3A%20In%20the%202021,male%20%5B1%5D%5B2%5D.>

⁶ WGEA 2022

⁷ WGEA Ibid

⁸ ATO (2020) *Taxation statistics 2019-20, Snapshot Table 5, Chart 12, Median super balance by age and sex*

⁹ E Bahar, N Bradshaw, N Deutscher, M Montaigne (2022). *Children and the gender earnings gap, Treasury Round Up October 2022*

¹⁰ ABS (2021). *How Australians Use Their Time, Table 1 Time Spent, 2020-21*