Office for Women Key Functions and Resourcing

Key points

- OFW's 2024-25 Departmental budget is **$13.3 million**.
    - This is a **$3.8 million increase** from last financial year ($9.5 million).
    - The change in funding levels since 2023-24 is due to a combination of:
        - additional funding of measure *Ending Gender-Based Violence* for 2024-25 ($1.0 million ongoing) to support whole of government coordination and identify further opportunities to respond to gender-based violence.
        - funding for a rapid review of targeted prevention approaches to violence against women ($1.0 million over two years from 2023-24).
        - net supplementation of operating funds by the department (approximately $3.1 million).
        - expiry of terminating measures from 2023-24 for *APS Capability Reinvestment Fund* and *APSC Micro-Credential Fund* ($1.34 million and $91,000 respectively).
        - efficiency savings and corporate overhead cost reductions applied by the department.
- OFW's 2024-25 operational budget was determined through normal departmental processes.
- As of 31 December 2024, OFW's average staffing level (ASL) is **66.5**.
    - Reported ASL does not include secondees or graduates.
- There are currently **no labour hire staff**.
- At any given time, the actual number of staff in OFW can vary, depending on long-term leave, vacancies, secondments, and timeframes for recruitment processes.
- As at 31 December 2024, OFW had formal recruitment efforts underway to fill three EL2 level vacancies. Further vacancies continue to be filled as need arises to back fill staff movement, secondments and long-term leave or recruit for specialised skill sets.

2024-25 Budget

- $3.9 million (five ongoing staff) over four years from 2024-25 (and $1.0 million per year ongoing) to support whole-of-government coordination efforts towards women's safety.
    - This funding supports the Government's commitment to strengthen gender equality and is additional to OFW's existing staffing of 64 ASL, which will be maintained going forward through reprioritisations within PM&C (as per WBS pg 15).
    - $1.3 million over two years from 2023-24 for a rapid review of targeted prevention approaches to violence against women, with a panel of experts to provide advice to Government.
    - The additional ASL this funding provided for was outlined in QoN58 following the last Budget Estimates in May 2024.

Role and functions

- OFW is responsible for driving whole-of-government reforms necessary to achieve equality, including leadership on:
    - Establishing an independent expert panel to undertake a rapid review of the approach to gender-based violence prevention and advise Government on additional efforts to end the cycle of violence.
    - Support whole of government coordination and work with DSS on further opportunities to respond to GBV and continue to embed focus on women's safety across government.
        - This includes coordinating the actions arising from National Cabinet on ending gender-based violence - at the state and territory level, through the First Secretaries Group (FSG), First Deputies Group (FDG) and the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council and officials, and at the Commonwealth level, through a SES B1-B2 Interdepartmental Committee and Secretaries Working Group on Gender-Based Violence.
    - Gender analysis and policy advice across key social and economic policies
    - Driving progress to achieve outcomes in *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*
    - Gender budgeting and implementing gender impact assessments across the APS, including capability uplift

- Implementing projects funded through the Working for Women Program, including working with the National Women's Alliances
- Monitoring and reporting on Government's targets for gender balance on Australian Government boards
- Australia's targeted international engagement, on UN Commission on the Status of Women, and Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Background

OFW staffing (as of 31 December 2024)

Staffing										
2023-24 Actual ASL	Actual ASL 31 Dec 2024	Increase	Actual FTE 31 Dec 2024	Head-count Ongoing	Head-count Non-Ongoing	Total funded Head-count	Secondee	Graduates	Labour Hire	Total Head-count
63.0	66.5	3.5	67.9	77	3	80	0	0	0	80

- As of 31 December 2024, diversity of the OFW workforce was 97.5 per cent female and 2.5 per cent male.

OFW Executive Director travel costs

- The appointment of the new Executive Director to the Office for Women (OFW) came into effect on 18 September 2023.
- The Executive Director is based in Sydney and travels to Canberra when required for in-person meetings. The cost of *official* travel is funded by the Office for Women.
- *Non-official* travel is met by the Executive Director and is personally funded.
- *Official Travel* is defined as travel undertaken for *Official Business* for the department, including ground and air transport, accommodation and business-related expenses.
- To meet requirements to be funded by PM&C, travel must be:
    - in accordance with the department's travel policies and government requirements relating to travel;
    - the most effective way to achieve the department's objectives;
    - only be undertaken where other communication tools, such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing are an ineffective option;
    - expenditure on travel must be economical, efficient, effective, ethical and can withstand public scrutiny.

2024-25 May Budget measures
Ending Gender-Based Violence – Additional Resourcing – (BP2 pg 157)

- The measure *Ending Gender-Based Violence* provided additional resourcing to further support informed policy advice to Government to end gender-based violence:
    - $3.9 million over four years from 2024–25 (and $1.0 million per year ongoing) in additional resourcing for the Office for Women, in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, to support whole of government coordination and work with the Department of Social Services to identify further opportunities to respond to gender-based violence and continue to embed a focus on women's safety across Government (BP2, pg 157)

  - $1.3 million over two years from 2023-24 for a rapid review of targeted prevention approaches to violence against women, with a panel of experts to provide advice to Government on preventing gender-based violence, including a focus on homicides. (BP2, pg 157)

- The resourcing for the Office for Women is in addition to its existing base funding and supports the Government's election commitment to strengthen the Office for Women.
- This measure supports the implementation of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-32.

Working for Women Program (WBS, pg 81)

- The Government has established the Working for Women Program to fund key partnerships to engage with women and the Australian community on gender equality, and further support the inclusion of women's voices and experiences in policy-making. This includes:
  - increased investment for a network of National Women's Alliances to inform ongoing implementation of *Working for Women* by providing evidence based, intersectional gender equality advice and civil society expertise to Government
  - establishing a research partnership to help build the evidence base on what works to achieve gender equality, especially in relation to driving economic equality. This will also allow policymakers to hear directly from the Australian community, particularly women about their priorities for achieving gender equality to inform and support the development of public policy.
- The Working for Women Program will also support actions to drive progress across *Working for Women*'s priority areas.

2023-24 May Budget measures

APS Capability Reinvestment Fund

- The measure *APS Capability Reinvestment Fund* provided $1.34 million in 2023-24 to support OFW to improve gender impact analysis in policy.

APSC Micro-Credential Fund

- The measure *APSC Micro-Credential Fund* provided $91,000 in 2023-24 to support OFW to work with the APSC to develop a gender analysis micro credential.

2022-23 October Budget measure

National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality

- The measure *Early Investment in a National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality* provided $3.1 million in 2022-23 to support OFW to deliver the Government's election commitments, including:
  - research and stakeholder engagement activities to develop a national strategy to achieve gender equality (now known as *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*)

- funding to establish the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce and for them commission advice and research
- initial investments in gender budgeting, including $350,000 in APS gender analysis capability and funding for a partnership with the OECD
- delivering a new grant round to encourage more women across the political spectrum to run for public office.

- All funds were expended by 30 June 2023. OFW continued to develop the Strategy from within existing resources.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee Questions on Notice on *Additional Staff Funding – Office for Women (QoN – 58)*

Date:	12 February 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy
Branch/Section:	Office for Women
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Nil

Comm-State Engagement

Subject/Issue

The Office for Women provides the secretariat function for the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council and coordinates meetings with state and territory officials to engage on women and women's safety policy.

OFW role

- The Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW) provides the secretariat for the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (the Council). The Council is co-chaired by the Minister for Women and the Minister for Social Services, and OFW works closely with DSS to support the co-chairs.
- OFW engages with other ministerial council secretariats to support the progression of cross-portfolio work on ending gender-based violence, including on Rapid Review recommendations in other portfolios.
- OFW also has regular engagement with state and territory counterparts through the Women and Women's Safety Senior Officials meetings and other informal mechanisms such as bilateral meetings.

Key points

- The Council is a forum for the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to drive shared progress on gender equality and women's safety.
- In 2025, the Council will focus on accelerating action to end gender-based violence, under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan), including delivery of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence. On 22 November 2024, the Council met to discuss national progress on gender equality and gender-based violence, including the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet outcomes (*refer to Attachment A for meeting Communique*).

Council tasking from National Cabinet

- On 6 September 2024, National Cabinet tasked the Council with the following actions (***SB25-000080- National Cabinet GBV*** *refers)*:
    - Negotiating a National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses (NPA), led by the Minister for Social Services and to commence from 1 July 2025.

  - Developing new national family and domestic violence (FDV) risk assessment principles a model framework, led by the Minister for Social Services.
    - This will be delivered through close collaboration with jurisdictions and across the Commonwealth.
  - Overseeing governments' collective responses to *Unlocking the Prevention Potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence* and report back to National Cabinet on progress by the end of 2025 (***Rapid Review BPB refers***).

- In response to the Rapid Review the Council is prioritising the following areas within their portfolio responsibilities of women and women's safety in 2025:
  - Men's behaviour change – by taking targeted efforts to address the significant gaps in responses to people who use violence.
  - Risk assessment – by working together to better manage risk, including the development and implementation of nationally consistent risk assessment and management principles.
  - Workforce – by collaborating to build the specialist FDSV workforce and to expand workforce capability of other services and sectors.

Specific questions regarding the NPA and the risk assessment principles should be directed to the Department for Social Services

Council governance arrangements

- As part of the Council's governance framework, the Council is supported by the Women and Women's Safety Senior Officials meeting, which includes officials responsible for women's and women's safety portfolios in each jurisdiction.
  - The Jurisdictional Working Group, led by DSS, focuses on women's safety policy including implementation of the National Plan.
- The Council's Communiques and Terms of Reference, recently updated on 7 February 2025, are published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website *(refer to Attachment B for the Terms of Reference)*.

Background

Council meetings leading up to National Cabinet

- The Council met on 6 September 2024 following the National Cabinet meeting for an update on the commitments made and to discuss the work tasked to the Council by National Cabinet.
- The Council met on 5 July 2024 to discuss how it could further support work to accelerate change in ending gender-based violence being led by National Cabinet following its meeting on 1 May 2024.

Establishment of the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council

- On 30 September 2022, National Cabinet established the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council as part of a renewed federal relations architecture.
    - The Council subsumed the duties of the former National Federal Reform Council's Taskforce on Women's Safety.
    - The inaugural meeting of the Council was held on 17 March 2023.
- The Council is co-chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Women and the Minister for Social Services, and consists of Commonwealth and state and territory ministers responsible for women and women's safety policy.
    - The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Micaela Cronin, is an ex-officio member of the Council.
    - *A list of the 15 current Ministers (and one ex-officio member) is at Attachment C.*
- The Council meets a minimum of three times per year, with additional meetings scheduled where required.
    - *A list of previous meeting outcomes for 2024 is at Attachment D.*
- A meeting communique is published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website following each meeting of the Council.

Date:	Xx March13 February 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Rochelle White
Branch/Section:	Social Policy and International Engagement/ Safety, Leadership and Commonwealth-State Engagement
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Department of Social Services

Attachment A

Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council – 22 November 2024 Meeting Communique

The Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (the Council) was convened virtually today to bring together Commonwealth and state and territory governments to drive national progress on gender equality and gender-based violence.

Ministers began the meeting by acknowledging that Monday 25 November marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, starting the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence. The 16 Days of Activism calls on all people to join forces to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. It also calls on governments worldwide to share how they are investing in gender-based violence prevention.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to end gender-based violence in one generation and expressed continued devastation about the lives lost to this violence. One life lost is one too many and the impact of this violence ripples across communities.

The meeting renewed shared efforts by the Commonwealth and states and territories to end gender-based violence and acknowledged progress on the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 and the subsequent Action Plans, along with investments to bring it into life.

First Nations Family Safety Plan

Ministers were unanimous about the need to address the disproportionate levels of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. Minister Rishworth was joined by Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, Minister for Indigenous Australians, to provide an update on the development of Australia's first dedicated First Nations Family Safety Plan (Family Safety Plan). The Council reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the Family Safety Plan, to sit alongside the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. Minister Rishworth noted that this Family Safety Plan will be a signature piece of policy that will guide a whole of society approach to addressing the unacceptable rates of violence against First Nations women and children.

6 September National Cabinet on Gender-based Violence Outcomes

Ministers discussed the 6 September National Cabinet on gender-based violence outcomes and next steps for the Council.

National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses

Minister Rishworth noted that formal NPA negotiations commenced on 26 September 2024 and thanked all state and territory representatives for their contributions to develop the renewed NPA Schedule. Minister Rishworth also confirmed that indexation would be included, bringing the Commonwealth's contribution to $365.884 million, with an additional $1 million set aside for an evaluation.

Minister Rishworth noted she will be seeking Ministerial endorsement and signature of the renewed NPA for execution following the completion of negotiations. Once the renewed NPA

Schedule is executed, the Commonwealth will work with state and territory officials for the first payments to be released in July 2025.

National FDV model best-practice risk assessment framework

Minister Rishworth noted that the initiative to develop new national FDV risk assessment principles and model framework (model framework), will be delivered through close collaboration with jurisdictions and across the Commonwealth. This initiative will also be informed by work undertaken by jurisdictions in response to the 1 May 2024 National Cabinet meeting, to explore opportunities to strengthen national consistency and drive best practice approaches across jurisdictions. The Commonwealth will work across its agencies and with all jurisdictions to ensure alignment between the model framework and relevant work programs announced at the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet.

Overseeing the response to the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches

Ministers agreed to use the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches (the Rapid review) to inform collective action and national coordination to address gender-based violence, including by prioritising the following areas in 2025:

- Men's behaviour change – by taking targeted efforts to address the significant gaps in responses to people who use violence, including improving the national evidence base, quality, capability and supply of men's behaviour change programs.
- Risk assessment – by working together to better manage risk, including the development and implementation of nationally consistent risk assessment and management principles.
- Workforce – by collaborating to build the specialist FDSV workforce and to expand workforce capability of other services and sectors.

Ministers agreed to explore opportunities and discuss next steps for collective and cross-jurisdictional actions to progress these key Rapid Review areas at the Council's next meeting.

Attachment B

Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council Terms of Reference

Authority	On 30 September 2022, National Cabinet agreed to the recommendations of the First Secretaries Group Review of Ministerial Councils. This included the formal establishment of the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (the Council) as part of a renewed federal relations architecture.
Purpose	The Council provides a forum for Commonwealth, state and territory governments to drive national progress on gender equality and women's safety across all areas in ending violence against women and children within Australia.
Membership	The Council consists of Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for women and women's safety. Each jurisdiction is represented by a maximum of four ministers with portfolio responsibility for women, families and/or prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence. The Council is co-chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Women and the Commonwealth Minister for Social Services. The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner is an ex-officio observer on the Ministerial Council. Where agreed, members of the Council may invite expert advisers and other government ministers to participate in specific meetings or discussions, as appropriate.
Governance	<u>Women and Women's Safety Senior Officials Group:</u> The Council will be supported by a Senior Officials-level group with representatives from the Commonwealth, states and territories. Senior Officials may identify new and emerging priorities for the Council, develop and review papers and provide oversight of the delivery of Council agreed priorities. The following working groups will sit below the Women and Women's Safety Senior Officials that will work to implement the Council's priorities. These groups will be: <u>Women's Safety Jurisdictional Working Group</u> The Women's Safety Jurisdictional Working Group (JWG) comprises of Commonwealth and state and territory government representatives responsible for women's safety. The JWG will work to progress the priorities of the Australian Government related to gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence, under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. In addition, the JWG can facilitate coordination and collaboration across jurisdictions in support of implementation of the of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025, the First Action Plan 2023-2027 and the First Nations Family Safety Plan following its release in 2025, where appropriate/as requested by the First Nations National Plan Steering Committee. <u>Subject-matter specific Jurisdictional Working Groups</u> Subject specific working groups can be convened as needed to drive joint Commonwealth, state and territory activities and respond to emerging issues for timely delivery of advice and solutions. Membership will be determined by the Commonwealth lead on the subject matter, and may include government officials from relevant portfolios and subject matter experts. Subject specific working groups may

	also draw on the expertise of existing advisory committees or convene subject specific advisory committees when required. Gender Equality Jurisdictional Working Group The Gender Equality Jurisdictional Working Group will consist of both Commonwealth and jurisdictional officials responsible for women's policy, including workplace gender segregation. The Group will support Senior Officials in driving progress on a broad base of women's policy issues and will support the Senior Officials Group by implementing decisions on gender equality and women's policy. The Group will convene as needed, as requested by any jurisdiction, and facilitated by a secretariat in the Commonwealth Office for Women (the Council Secretariat). The Group may also conduct work out-of-session where required.
Operations and decision making	The Council will meet a minimum of three times per annum via a mixture of virtual and face-to-face formats. Where agreed by the co-Chairs and on advice from members, extraordinary meetings may be scheduled. The Council may also conduct work out-of-session as required (protocols discussed below). Meeting agendas and papers will be distributed at least five business days prior to the meeting. The Council will make joint decisions and agree on common principles, however there will be flexibility in implementation across the jurisdictions to account for each jurisdiction's unique circumstances. Where possible, decisions should be consensus based. Where consensus or resolution cannot be reached on an agenda item within the established timeframe, consideration will be given to progressing an item through agreement between the Commonwealth and smaller groups of States and Territories. The operations and decision making of the Council will adhere to National Cabinet's Guidance for Intergovernmental Meetings. All jurisdictions will be invited to propose agenda items for consideration by the co-Chairs. These items must be submitted to Council Secretariat no later than six weeks (45 calendar days) prior to the relevant meeting, with the exception of urgent or emerging issues. The Council will consult and collaborate as appropriate with other Ministerial Councils on matters of gender equality and women's safety. This will enable collaborative work and ensure alignment of priorities, noting that gender inequality and women's safety issues intersect across multiple portfolios. This may include, but is not limited to, collaboration with: ○ Data and Digital Ministers Meeting ○ Standing Council of Attorneys-General ○ Police Ministers Council ○ Health Ministers Meeting ○ Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council ○ Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council ○ Council on Federal Financial Relations For example, the Ministerial Council will coordinate with the Standing Council of Attorneys-General in relation to work on women's safety. Under the *Work Plan to Strengthen Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault 2022-27*, all state and territory governments have committed to take collective and individual action to improve the experiences of victim-survivors of sexual assault in the criminal justice system. The

	Commonwealth, state and territory governments are working together to implement the National Principles to Address Coercive Control.
Out of session protocols	Where a decision needs to be made out of session, the Council Secretariat will circulate a decision brief to all Ministers seeking their unanimous endorsement, approval, agreement or noting of the relevant matter. Ministers will endeavor to return their votes within 15 business days. The Council Secretariat will circulate written confirmation the item has been endorsed, approved, agreed or noted. Council Secretariat will maintain a list of all items progressed out of session, and will provide an update at each Council meeting.
Scope of Ministerial Council responsibility	As an outcome of its 6 September 2024 meeting, National Cabinet tasked the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council with overseeing Government's collective response to the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches report, *Unlocking the Prevention Potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence,* and to report back to National Cabinet on progress by the end of 2025. In addition to specific work plan priorities, the Council will also support efforts to collectively respond to emerging issues and evidence relating to women's safety, where possible and appropriate. The Council will also consider the interactions and alignment between jurisdictions' gender equality strategies and frameworks, including to inform the Commonwealth's implementation of *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*. The Council will also consider interactions and alignment with jurisdictions' domestic, family and sexual violence strategies to inform future work to implement the National Plan.
Review and reporting	The Council will annually review the agreed priorities outlined in the work plan to ensure the Council continues to meet its objectives. This will ensure that identified new and emerging priorities, informed by discussions at meetings, are reflected in the forward work plan. The Council will report annually to National Cabinet on their priorities and annual work plans and on other key national priorities affecting women and women's safety, as required. To ensure the intergovernmental system remains focused on key priorities, the First Secretaries Group and National Cabinet will review the Council structure every two years. To facilitate review, the co-chairs of the Council will submit a summary of achievements of the previous year and the top priorities (maximum of five) for the upcoming year to the First Secretaries Group. Members of the Council may request a review of the operations of the Council and/or the forward work plan at any time through a written request to the Secretariat. Any review of operations must be agreed to by the Council.

Attachment C
Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council Members *(As at 13 March 2025)*

Jurisdiction	Full Name	Title/Position
Commonwealth	Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher	Minister for Women *(Co-Chair)*
	The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP	Minister for Social Services *(Co-Chair)*
	The Hon Kate Thwaites MP	Assistant Minister for Women
	The Hon Justine Elliot MP	Assistant Minister for Social Services; Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
	Ms Micaela Cronin	Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner *(Ex-Officio)*
ACT	Dr Marisa Paterson MLA	Minister for Women; Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
NSW	The Hon Jodie Harrison MP	Minister for Women; Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
NT	The Hon Robyn Cahill OAM	Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
	The Hon Jinson Charls	Minister for Youth, Seniors and Equality
QLD	The Hon Fiona Simpson MP	Minister for Women and Women's Economic Security
	The Hon Amanda Camm MP	Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
SA	The Hon Katrine Hildyard MP	Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence
TAS	The Hon Jo Palmer MLC	Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence
VIC	The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP	Minister for Women; Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
WA	The Hon Sue Ellery MLC	Minister for Women's Interests
	The Hon Sabine Winton MLA	Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence

Attachment D

Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council 2024 Meeting Outcomes

Meeting 7 – 22 November 2024		
Outcomes	<u>First Nations Family Safety Plan</u> 1. Received update on the development of the First Nations Family Safety Plan. <u>6 September 2024 National Cabinet on gender-based violence outcomes</u> 2. Received update on the progress of negotiations for the National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses. 3. Received update on the initiative to develop new national FDV risk assessment principles and a model framework. 4. Agreed to drive action on the following areas in 2025 in response to the Rapid Review: a. Men's behaviour change b. Risk assessment c. Workforce	
Attendance	**Apologies** - Minister Charls (NT) - Minister Ward (VIC)	**Guests** - The Hon Malarndirri McCarthy - Minister for Indigenous Australians (Cth)

Meeting 6 – 6 September 2024		
Outcomes	<u>6 September 2024 National Cabinet meeting on gender-based violence</u> 1. Noted the Council's ongoing role regarding coordination and delivery of cross-jurisdictional work in support of *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-32.* 2. Noted that National Cabinet agreed for the Council to oversee the collective response to *Unlocking the Prevention Potential: Accelerating action to end to end domestic, family and sexual violence*, and will report back to National Cabinet on progress by the end of 2025. 3. Noted that National Cabinet agreed for the Council to negotiate a National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses, to commence on 1 July 2025.	
Attendance	**Apologies** - Minister Berry (ACT) - Chief Minister Finocchiaro (NT) - Minister Fentiman (QLD) - Minister D'Ath (QLD) - Minister Hutchins (VIC) - Minister Ellery (WA)	**Guests** - Nil

Meeting 5 – 5 July 2024	
Outcomes	<u>1 May 2024 National Cabinet meeting on gender-based violence</u> 1. Committed to align efforts on National Cabinet work with Data and Digital Ministers, Standing Council of Attorneys-General and Police Ministers, and the Joint Council on Closing the Gap. 2. Discussed three key initiatives:

	a. $925.2 million to establish Leaving Violence Program (LVP) as an ongoing financial support program from mid-2025. b. $4 million for ANROWS in 2024-25 to further build the evidence bas on DFSV. c. Continued focus on impact of DFSV on First Nations communities, including missing and murdered First Nations women and children. <u>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, domestic and sexual violence and Activities Addendum</u> 3. Agreed in-principle to establish annual public reporting against actions at the Reform Area level for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to align with annual reporting on the Activities Addendum of the First Action Plan 2023/27.	
Attendance	**Apologies** - Minister Ah Kit (NT) - Minister Fentiman (QLD) - Minister D'Ath (QLD) - Minister Hutchins (VIC)	**Guests** - Nil

Meeting 4 – 1 March 2024		
Outcomes	<u>Data, monitoring and evaluation of the National Plan</u> 1. Noted that Minister Rishworth would be seeking out of session endorsement on the Performance Measurement Plan of the National Plan. 2. Affirmed the commitment under Action 2 in the First Action Plan 2023-2027 (Action Plan) to work together to consider and agree further numerical targets across each of the four domains of the National Plan over the life of the Action Plan. <u>Intimate-partner homicide</u> 3. Held a meaningful discussion on challenges, current initiatives and opportunities for learning and more coordinated action across jurisdictions towards reducing intimate partner homicide.	
Attendance	**Apologies** - Minister Worden (NT) - Minister Fentiman (QLD) - Minister D'Ath (QLD) - TAS (in caretaker)	**Guests** - Dr Niki Vincent – Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner (VIC)

WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET

Subject/Issue

This brief focuses on the role of Office for Women (OFW) in delivering National Cabinet gender-based violence outcomes and additional details on progress since 6 September 2024.

Refer to ***SB25-000080: National Cabinet GBV*** for National Cabinet measures and outcomes, and a high-level overview of progress.

Key points

- National Cabinet met twice in 2024 (1 May and 6 September 2024) to discuss the national crisis of gender-based violence (*refer to Attachment A for 6 September agreed actions and Attachment B for 1 May actions)*.
- On 6 September 2024, National Cabinet agreed to a comprehensive $4.7 billion package that harnesses important opportunities to work together to prevent gender-based violence and support legal services.
- Progress against key National Cabinet announcements includes:
    - The new National Access to Justice Partnership ($3.9 billion over 5 years), has been agreed and will commence 1 July 2025.
    - Minister Rishworth has undertaken negotiations for the new National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses (NPA). The new NPA has been agreed and signed by all Australian governments (as at 7 March 2025) and will commence 1 July 2025.
    - Work has commenced across multiple agencies for the various measures under the $82.4 million package to respond to high-risk perpetrators; the $80 million support for children package; and the commitments to address harmful systems and industries.
        - Further detail on progress to date is in ***SB25-000080.***
- First Deputies Group are receiving regular updates on progress against these commitments and are providing relevant oversight to support implementation across the commonwealth and jurisdictions.
- The commitments under this National Cabinet bring the Government's investments in support of women's safety under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children* to $4 billion since October 2022. (Refer to ***SB25-000074: Investments in Women*** and ***SB25-000079: Overview – Women's Safety*** for further information on Government funding commitments to women's safety).

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET**
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

*Refer any specific questions to relevant portfolios outlined in Attachment A, and Refer to the 'background' of **SB25-000080** for details on each measure.*

Role of Office for Women in delivering on National Cabinet outcomes

OFW led whole-of-Government coordination to deliver National Cabinet priorities in close collaboration with Commonwealth agencies and through relevant Commonwealth-State mechanisms:

- OFW established a Commonwealth SES B1-B2 interdepartmental committee to progress and discuss work relating to the agreed actions.
    - Membership included AGD, DSS, Education, Employment, Finance, Health, Home Affairs, Infrastructure, Treasury, NIAA and PM&C.
    - The first IDC meeting was held 20 May 2024, with meetings held regularly until 3 October 2024.
- OFW worked within the existing National Cabinet architecture, including through First Secretaries Group and First Deputies Group.
- OFW also provided the Secretariat support to a Secretaries' Working Group (SWG) on Gender-Based Violence, which supported the development of the Commonwealth gender-based violence package in the lead up the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet meeting.
    - OFW will continue to provide Secretariat support to SWG, which will oversee the audit of Commonwealth Government systems (***FAS BPB –*** *Audit of Systems Abuse in Australian Government Systems refers).*
- OFW also provides Secretariat support for the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council, which was tasked by National Cabinet to oversee the governments' collective response to the Rapid Review (***FAS BPB – Comm-State Engagement*** *refers*).

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET

Date:	17 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy – First Assistant Secretary
Branch/Section:	Office for Women
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Nil

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET**
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Attachment A – 6 September 2024 National Cabinet on Gender-Based Violence Agreed Actions

Refer to SB25-000080 for narrative

***Handling note**: the breakdown for measures under the high-risk perpetrator package and children and young people package have not been announced publicly. Only the high-level funding amounts were specified in the 2024-25 MYEFO.

National Cabinet agreed actions – 6 Sep 2024			
Area	**Action**	**Lead**	**Details**
General	Prioritisation of Women's Safety	All	First Ministers agreed that ending the national crisis of gender-based violence, including violence against children and young people, will remain an ongoing priority for National Cabinet.
General	Central focus on First Nations Women and Children	All	National Cabinet agreed to maintain a central focus on missing and murdered First Nations women and children and agreed that all government commitments on gender-based violence must explicitly consider the needs and experiences of First Nations people, and be delivered in genuine partnership with First Nations communities.
General	Overseeing the response to the Rapid Review	WWSMC	Governments will progressively respond to the review with the collective response overseen by WWSMC, who will report back to National Cabinet on progress by the end of 2025.
Legal responses	National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP)	Commonwealth, Attorney-General	The NAJP Heads of Agreement commits Commonwealth funding of $3.9 billion over five years from 1 July 2025, including a critical $800 million increase in funding, with a focus on uplifting legal services responding to gender-based violence. $500 million of this increase will uplift quarantined funding for Community Legal Centres, Women's Legal Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Legal Services, Legal Aid Commissions and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. The NAJP was agreed by States and Territories on 30 November 2024, following the Attorney-General's announcement of the NAJP's details on 22 November. The NAJP will commence on 1 July 2025.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET**

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Frontline services	National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses (NPA)	Commonwealth, Minister for Social Services	Matched commitment of at least $716.9 million ($365.9 million Commonwealth contribution), and additional $1.0 million Commonwealth funding for an evaluation. The $365.9 million Commonwealth contribution includes $15.9 million for indexation, consistent with NAJP and National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness. The renewed NPA agreement, in combination with investment for the innovative perpetrator responses and 500 workers initiatives, will continue to provide similar levels of Commonwealth investment for frontline services support as that provided over 2023-25. The Commonwealth to negotiate a new schedule under the current NPA with states and territories, led through the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (WWSMC).
Responding to high-risk perpetrators*	**The Commonwealth will provide $82.4 million [public figure] to deliver stronger, nationally consistent approaches to risk assessment and high-risk perpetrators.**		
	Risk Assessment Principles	Commonwealth Minister for Social Services	Develop new national best practice family and domestic violence risk assessment principles and a model best practice risk assessment framework, in consultation with states and territories through WWSMC.
	Enhancements to the National Criminal Intelligence System	SCAG and Police Ministers Council (PMC)	Support enhancements to the National Criminal Intelligence System, which enables information sharing across jurisdictions, to provide a 'warning flag' that will assist police responding to high-risk perpetrators.
	Information Sharing	SCAG and PMC	Extend and increase nationally-consistent, two-way information sharing between the family law courts and state and territory courts, child protection, policing and firearms agencies.
	Focussed deterrence models and Domestic Violence Threat Assessment Centres	SCAG and PMC	Strengthen system responses to high-risk perpetrators to prevent homicides, by trialling new focussed deterrence models and Domestic Violence Threat Assessment Centres. These centres will be able to use intelligence, monitor individuals and intervene with those at high risk of carrying out homicide.
	Conduct critical research projects	Attorney-General	Projects will focus on: • on bail, remand, parole and sentencing with regard to risk of intimate partner homicide

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET**

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

			• improving the operation of court mandated behaviour change programs and their interaction with justice systems
Children and young people*	**The Commonwealth will provide $81.3 million to enhance and expand child centric, trauma informed supports for children and young people to help break the cycle of violence.**		
	Consultation to inform design of new initiatives	Commonwealth Minister for Social Services, in consultation with Minister for Indigenous Australians and Attorney-General	Funding to consult sector experts to identify gaps in supports for children and young people, including First Nations children and young people, who have experienced or witnessed FDSV, to inform new and revised initiatives and interventions.
	Specialised Family Violence Services (SFVS)	Commonwealth Minister for Social Services	Funding to extend funding to SFVS, and expand and extend the Children Specific Counselling Service components of the SFVS.
	First Nations children and young people in SFVS	Commonwealth Minister for Social Services, in consultation with Minister for Indigenous Australians	Funding to expand and extend funding to four existing ACCOs under SFVS from 2024-25 and fund up to an additional 15 ACCOs to provide culturally safe child-centred support available to First Nations children and young people and their families under SFVS.
	Enhancement of Supporting Children After Separation Program (SCaSP)	Commonwealth Attorney-General	Funding to expand the SCASP to provide specialised, longer-term support for children of separated families affected by family violence who are already engaged in counselling support with SCASP, to avoid needing to transfer those cases to a SFVS.
	Supporting children at risk of engaging in harmful sexual behaviours and victim-survivors of child sexual abuse.	Commonwealth Attorney-General	$12.8 million over five years from 2024-25 to better equip existing specialist and community support services to respond to child sexual abuse and children displaying, or at risk of displaying, harmful sexual behaviours. This was announced on 28 October, by the Minister for Social Services and the Attorney-General.
Men and boys	National standards for men's behaviour change	Commonwealth, Minister for Social Services	The Commonwealth will provide $2.6 million over three years from 2024–25 to develop national standards and implementation mechanisms for men's behaviour change, in consultation with states and territories and relevant key stakeholders.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET**

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Addressing the role of systems and harmful industries	Audit of key Commonwealth government systems	Commonwealth, Whole of Government	$0.2 million in 2024-25 to conduct an audit of Commonwealth government systems to identify ways perpetrators are exploiting them to abuse victim survivors and embed safety by design principles within new and existing systems.
	Review of alcohol framework	Commonwealth Minister for Health and Aged Care	Commonwealth funding of $1 million to update the *National Framework for action to prevent alcohol-related family violence*.
	Review of alcohol laws	States and Territories	State and Territory First Ministers to review alcohol laws and its impact on family and domestic violence victims to identify and share best practice and reforms and to report back to National Cabinet.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET**
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Attachment B – 1 May 2024 National Cabinet on Gender-Based Violence Agreed Actions

Refer to SB25-000080 for narrative

National Cabinet agreed actions – 1 May 2024		
Action	**Lead**	**Details**
Strengthening prevention efforts	Commonwealth, DFSV Commissioner and OFW	A new measure for an expert panel to conduct a rapid review of best practices approaches to prevention. The expert panel to engage with states and territories, and key stakeholders, especially First Nations experts.
Improving police and justice responses to high risk and serial perpetrators	Commonwealth, Attorney-General	Police Ministers Council to work alongside the Standing Council of Attorneys-General to develop options for improving police responses to high risk and serial perpetrators of gender-based violence, including considering use of focussed deterrence and fixated threat strategies.
Strengthening national consistency	States, Victoria and South Australia led by the Council for the Australian Federation (CAF)	States and Territories to explore opportunities to strengthen national consistency and drive best practice approaches across jurisdictions.
Improving information sharing about perpetrators	Commonwealth, Minister for Finance and Women	Improving information sharing about perpetrators across systems and jurisdictions, complements existing work of the Data and Digital Ministers and Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council.
Additional Commonwealth measures (announced on 1 May)		
Leaving Violence Program	Commonwealth, Minister for Social Services	$925.2 million over five years is provided in the May 2024-25 Budget to permanently establish the Leaving Violence Program announcing the program will commence by mid-2025.
Phase five of Stop it at the Start	Commonwealth, Minister for Social Services	$55.3 million over years from 2022-23 was provided in the 2022-23 Budget for a fifth and sixth phase of the primary prevention campaign. Launching phase five of the Stop it at the Start campaign in mid-June 2024 to counter violent and misogynistic content online.
Learning from lived experience	Commonwealth, Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner	Continuing to learn from those with lived experience of violence. This could be implemented through the existing Lived Experience Advisory Council led by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission.
Legislation on deepfake pornography	Commonwealth, Attorney General	Introducing legislation to ban the creation and distribution of deepfake pornography.
Classification reforms	Joint, led by Commonwealth Minister for Communications	Undertaking classification reforms with states and territories to examine options to reduce exposure to violent pornography informed by experts. This is an existing measure.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WOMEN'S SAFETY – NATIONAL CABINET**

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Review of the Online Safety Act	Commonwealth, Minister for Communication	Bring forward the Statutory Review of the *Online Safety Act 2021* by one year; and bring forward legislation on doxxing in early August 2024 to outlaw the release of private information online with an intent to cause harm.
Age assurance pilot to protect children online	Commonwealth, Minister for Communication	$6.5 million is provided in the May 2024-25 Budget for a pilot of age assurance technologies to better protect children online, and support codes or standards under the Online Safety Act.

Women's Safety

Subject

The government is committed to effective action to improve women's safety.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on the ***National Plan*** *to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* to the Department of Social Services.
- Refer questions on justice responses to **sexual violence or coercive control** to the Attorney-General's Department.
- Refer questions on the **National Student Ombudsman** and the **National Higher Education Code** to the Department of Education.
- Refer questions on the Government's **online safety** agenda - including the **Online Harms Ministers Meeting** - to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA).
- Refer questions on the **Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission** to the Commission.
- Related briefs:
    - Backpocket Brief on the **Rapid Review**
    - Backpocket Brief on **Comm-State Engagement**
    - Backpocket Brief on **First Nations Women and Children's Safety**
    - Backpocket Brief on **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**
    - SB25-000079 Hot Issues Brief **Women's Safety**
    - SB25-000080 Hot Issues Brief **National Cabinet GBV**

Key points

- The Government is investing $4.0 billion under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan) since the October 2022-23 Budget *(SB25-000079 Overview – Women's Safety* refers).
- On 6 September, National Cabinet agreed to a comprehensive $4.7 billion package that harnesses important opportunities to work together to prevent violence and support legal services (*SB25-000080 National Cabinet GBV* refers). This package includes $4.4 billion of new Commonwealth funding.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Women's Safety**
ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Key facts and figures

- The National Plan sets a target of a 25 per cent reduction per year in female victims of intimate partner homicide.
    - Between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years, there was a 35 per cent **increase** in the number of female victims (46 incidents in 2023-24 compared to 34 incidents a year earlier), and a 34 per cent **increase** in the rate of female IPH.
        - These figures were published in March 2025 by the Australian Institute of Criminology, as part of the annual *2023-24 Homicide in Australia* report *(SB25-000079 Women's Safety Overview* refers).
    - The AIC's intimate partner homicide dashboard shows that between the 2023 and 2024 calendar years, there was a 20 per cent reduction in the number of female victims of IPH.[1]
    - The figure differences can be explained by the different time periods the dashboard and report refer to (i.e. financial v calendar year).
- Since the age of 15:[2]
    - One in two women has experienced sexual harassment
    - One in three women has experienced physical violence
    - One in four women has experienced violence by an intimate partner
    - One in five women has experienced sexual violence.
- Indigenous women are 33 times more likely to be hospitalised due to violence than non-Indigenous women and six times more likely to die as a result of family violence.[3]

OFW Role

- OFW supports whole-of-government coordination efforts towards ending gender-based violence.
- OFW works with DSS – as the steward of the National Plan – and other Commonwealth departments to provide strategic, coordinated, advice to government on how best to respond to gender-based violence, from a centralised position in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

---

[1] AIC dashboard, released 10 Feb 2025,
Family and Sexual Violence Commission (DFSV Commission), Yearly Report to Parliament, DFSV Commission, Commonwealth of Australia, 2024.
[2] Personal Safety, Australia, 2021-22 financial year | Australian Bureau of Statistics
[3] Investing in Community-led Men's Wellness Centres to help stem violence | Ministers' media centre

- This recognises that there are critical opportunities to prevent violence that must be comprehensively harnessed across the Commonwealth.

National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

- On 17 October 2022, the Australian, state, and territory governments jointly released the National Plan, which commits governments to act to end gender-based violence in one generation.
- On 16 August 2023, the Australian, state and territory governments launched the First Action Plan 2023-2027, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025, the Outcomes Framework, and the National Plan Theory of Change.
- The Government is currently developing *Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence* s 47E(d) (*First Nations Women and Children's Safety BPB* refers).
    - OFW is being consulted on the development of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices by the Department of Social Services.

First Action Plan 2023-2027

- The First Action Plan 2023-2027 outlines 10 actions as a roadmap to achieving the objectives of the National Plan over the next five years.
- The First Action Plan is accompanied by an Activities Addendum detailing investments and efforts by the Commonwealth, states and territories to implement each of the 10 actions.
    - The Activities Addendum is updated annually to track implementation of the activities and add new activities as required.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025

- On 16 August 2023, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments launched a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025 under the National Plan (First Nations Women and Children's Safety BPB refers).

National Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Outcomes Framework includes, for the first time, six national level targets agreed to by Commonwealth, states and territories. The targets include:
    1. 25 per cent annual reduction in female victims of intimate partner homicide.[4]
    2. An increase in knowledge of behaviours that constitute family, domestic and sexual violence.[5]
    3. An increase in attitudes that condemn violence against women.
    4. An increase in attitudes that reject gender inequality.
    5. An increase in attitudes that reject sexual violence.
    6. Closing the Gap Target 13: by 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress towards zero.[6]
- The targets will be measured through a Performance Measurement Plan and Evaluation Strategy, with additional targets to be identified as more data becomes available.
    - The Performance Measurement Plan and Evaluation Strategy was endorsed by all state and territory Ministers and released on 6 May 2024.

Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality

- Gender-based violence is the first priority area for action under *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (Working for Women) in recognition that gender equality cannot be achieved without eliminating violence against women *(SB25-000002 Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* refers).

[4] Measured by the Australian Institute of Criminology's (AIC) National Homicide Monitoring Program.
[5] [5] Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) runs the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) every four years. The most recent NCAS was conducted in 2021. The NCAS collects information on community understanding of violence against women and their attitudes towards violence.
[6] The NCAS and AIC Homicide in Australia report are being investigated as potential data sources. DSS also received funding in the 2023-24 Budget to support data arrangements for the First Nations National Plan.

- The Government is committed to effective action to improve women's safety, including working with states and territories, examining systems, and challenging gender attitudes and stereotypes.
- Working for Women complements existing work under the National Plan and identifies priority areas for action over the next 10 years.

Social Services portfolio (including the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission)

Leaving Violence Program

- The Leaving Violence Program will support victim survivors of intimate partner violence to make choices about leaving violent relationships through providing individualised support packages.
- Telstra Health has been selected to deliver the Leaving Violence Program on behalf of the Australian Government, published on AusTender on 12 March 2025. The selection of Telstra Health follows a competitive, open procurement process conducted by the Department of Social Services.
- Eligible victim-survivors, regardless of visa status or gender, will be able to access up to $5,000 in financial support (indexed annually), as well as support services including for risk assessments and safety planning.
- The Leaving Violence Program will replace both the Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) trial and Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot (TVP) from 1 July 2025.

Crisis Accommodation and Housing

- The Government will provide $100 million over five years for new crisis and transitional housing for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, and older women at risk of homelessness through the Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program (CTAP, as part of the Housing Australia Future Fund).
    - As at 19 February 2025, **42** projects have been offered funding under the **CTAP**. DSS has commenced the negotiation of grant agreements and terms and conditions of funding with successful organisations.
- The Government committed $100 million over five years in the 2022-23 October Budget to continue the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation program via the Safe Places Inclusion Round.

- On 8 October 2024 the first Safe Places Inclusion Round project was tenanted. This turnkey project, located in the ACT, has created 16 safe places, which will assist up to 32 women and children experiencing family and domestic violence each year.
- As at 19 February 2025, a total of **32** Safe Places (Round 1) projects have commenced assisting women and children. These projects are delivering approximately **604** safe places, assisting up to **5,104** women and children experiencing family and domestic violence each year.

- In addition to the Department of Social Services, the Treasury is also working to increase crisis and transitional accommodation through implementing the Government's commitment to:
  - target $1.0 billion under the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF) towards crisis and transitional accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, and youth.

500 workers

- Through the 2022-23 October budget, the Government provided $169.4 million for 500 new frontline service and community workers to support women and children experiencing violence. Funding is provided to state and territory governments through the National Partnership on FDSV Responses 2021–23.
  - As at 28 February 2025, 448 workers (397.8 FTE) have commenced across Australia.

Men, masculinities and behaviour change

- On 8 February 2025, The Government announced almost $2.7 million to extend funding for three early intervention support services for men, including those who perpetrate or experience family and domestic violence.
- At the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet, the Government agreed to a number of measures including an $82.4 million package to strengthen responses to high-risk and serial perpetrators of family and domestic

violence, and to establish national standards for men's behaviour change (SB25-000080 National Cabinet GBV refers).

- This is additional to existing Government funding such as:
    - $34.8 million over five years from 2022-23 for a national early intervention trial for young men and adolescent boys aged 12-18 at risk of perpetrating family, domestic or sexual violence.
    - $27 million over five years from 2022-23 to partner with jurisdictions to trial innovative approaches to address perpetrator behaviour.
    - $3.5 million for a Healthy Masculinities Trial and Evaluation, that aims to encourage healthy expressions of masculinity among school-aged boys and young men and determine what works.

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (DFSVC)

The role of the DFSVC is to provide strategic policy advice to Government, promote coordination across government and communities, monitor progress of the National Plan, and amplify the voices of people with lived experience.

The Commission's first *Yearly Report to Parliament (Yearly Report)* on the progress towards the objectives of the National Plan was tabled in parliament on 21 August 2024. The Yearly Report explores areas across policy, implementation and service delivery that present opportunities to accelerate, amplify and drive impact through implementation of the National Plan, and outlines key areas of focus for consideration by governments.

- The Commission established the Lived Experience Advisory Council to amplify the voices of people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence at the national level.
    - The Advisory Council shares advice with the Commission to create and improve domestic, family and sexual violence policy, systems and services and report on implementation and progress towards the objectives of the National Plan.
- In 2023 and 2024, the Commission convened a series of roundtables on women's safety. Detail on these are listed at **Appendix A.**

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Women's Safety**
ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Attorney General's portfolio

Family Law reform

- $44.5 million over three years from 2025-26 to the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia to continue providing family law case management services to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups and victims of family and domestic violence.
- The Family Law Amendment Bill 2024 (the Amendment Bill) was passed by parliament on 20 November 2024 and makes division of property and finances safer and fairer for separating family, especially where family violence is present.
    - Most changes commenced on 10 June 2025.
- This follows significant changes to the Family Law system which came into effect from 6 May 2024, including changes to:
    - The *Family Law Amendment Act 2023* to place the best interests of the children, including their safety, at the centre of decisions on parenting arrangements, including repeal of the presumption of 'equal shared parental responsibility'
    - The *Family Law Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2023* to ensure family law courts can access information about family violence, child abuse or neglect from child protection, police and firearms agencies.

National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP)

- On 30 November 2024, States and Territories agreed the new National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP), which will provide $3.9 billion over five years and deliver a critical $800 million increase in funding to the legal assistance sector.
    - The NAJP will commence on 1 July 2025 *(SB25-000080* refers).

Sexual violence legislation, including consent laws

- Ensuring the justice system responds to the needs of victim survivors of sexual violence is a priority of the National Plan.
- The Government is leading national efforts to improve the way the justice system deals with sexual violence, including by partnering with states and territories to strengthen and harmonise laws relating to sexual assault and consent.
- The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) Inquiry into justice responses to sexual violence commenced on 22 January 2024, and

provided its report to the Attorney-General on 22 January 2025. The report was tabled on 6 March 2025, and the Attorney-General announced a $21.4 million package to strengthen support for victims and survivors *(SB25-000079* refers).

Respect@Work

- On 19 September 2024, the Australian parliament passed the *Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (Costs Protection) Bill 2023*, which implements the Government's response to Recommendation 25 of the Respect@Work report, adopting a modified equal access cost model, to address a key barrier to people pursuing redress for discrimination and sexual harassment.
    - This is last piece of legislative reform to fulfil the Government's commitment to implement the Respect@Work Report
    - An equal access costs model means that individuals who bring claims of discrimination and sexual harassment can recoup their legal costs if they are successful while being protected from having to pay legal costs if they are unsuccessful (except in limited circumstances).
- For details, refer to the Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Back Pocket Brief.

Modern Slavery

- On 11 November 2024, the Australian Government announced the appointment of Chris Evans as Australia's first Anti-Slavery Commissioner. Mr Evans commenced his five year term on 2 December 2024.
- The government committed $8 million over four years in the 2023-24 Budget (and $2 million per year ongoing) to support the Commissioner's establishment and operation.
- Human trafficking, slavery, and slavery-like practices such as forced labour and forced marriage are a fundamental violation of human rights. Forced marriage is a form of gender based-violence and disproportionately affects women and girls. Globally, women and girls are disproportionately affected by modern slavery.

Coercive Control

- The Standing Council of Attorneys-General released the National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence on 22 September 2023 to inform responses to family and domestic violence, and promote more consistent and safer outcomes for victim-survivors.
    - In March 2024, and again in September 2024, the Attorney General's Department (AGD) has released additional supporting materials aimed towards First Nations audiences, young people, at-risk cohorts and healthcare practitioners.
- Criminalisation of coercive control is an issue for states and territories to legislate.

Education portfolio

- On 23 February 2024, Education Ministers agreed to the *Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education* (Action Plan), to improve university student and staff safety.
- The Action Plan recognises the unique role that higher education providers can and must play in driving the broader social change needed to address gender-based violence.
- The Action Plan is a multi-pronged approach to create higher education communities free from gender-based violence, through seven actions including investing;
    - $19.4 million over two years to establish an independent National Student Ombudsman; and
    - $18.7 million over four years to establish a *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender based Violence* (National Code).
- The National Student Ombudsman commenced on 1 February 2025 and has powers to investigate student complaints and resolve disputes with universities, including complaints about sexual assault, sexual harassment and all gender-based violence.
    - The National Student Ombudsman has been established as an ongoing function of the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
    - Sarah Bendall will lead the new National Student Ombudsman function of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's office.
- Legislation to introduce the National Code was tabled in Parliament on 6 February 2025.

- The National Code will establish a new set of best practice standards all higher education providers must meet in preventing and responding to gender-based violence in their communities.
- The National Code will embed accountability at the highest level, drive cultural change, and ensure safe and person-centred responses for people who experience gender-based violence.
- OFW was consulted on the drafting of the National Code by the Department of Education.

Employment, and Workplace Relations portfolio

Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave

- *The Fair Work Amendment (Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2022* changed the minimum entitlement of five days unpaid family and domestic violence leave under the National Employment Standards to an entitlement of 10 days paid leave.
- On 9 October 2024, the Australian Government tabled the review of *the Fair Work Amendment (Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2022* in the Parliament.
  - The independent review found the program is succeeding in supporting the financial security of those escaping or experiencing violence. 91 per cent of those surveyed said it helped maintain their income.
  - A total of 12 findings and five recommendations resulted from the review. The most notable was that there should be a focus on increasing awareness and understanding of the leave entitlement through communities and workplaces.
- The Government's response, published on 25 February 2025, agreed to all five recommendations made by the review.

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts portfolio (including the eSafety Commission)

- Technology may be used to perpetrate gendered violence and abuse, including intimate partner coercive control, cyberstalking and non-consensual sharing of intimate images and videos.
- Through the 2024-25 MYEFO, the Government is investing $76.1 million over four years (and $16.9 million per year ongoing from 2028-29) to support the implementation of its online safety agenda, including the minimum age of access to social media legislation.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Women's Safety**
ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

- On 13 November 2024, the Government committed to legislating a Digital Duty of Care for online services operating in Australia.
- The Duty of Care will place legal obligations on services operating in Australia to take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harms as a result of use of their platforms.
    - The duty of care model is a key recommendation of the independent statutory review of the *Online Safety Act 2021* undertaken by Ms Delia Rickard PSM and published on 4 February 2025.
    - DITRDCA has consulted OFW on the Government response to the Review of the Online Safety Act. The Government is carefully considering its response to the Review.
- On 29 November 2024, Parliament passed the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024*, which put the onus on social media platforms, not parents or young people, to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 years of age from having accounts.
    - The new laws take effect within one year from assent (10 December 2025).
    - The Government proposes to exclude messaging services, online games, and services that primarily function to support the education and health of users, and YouTube.
    - A rule-making power is available to exclude specific classes of services. The minimum age obligation is not expected to apply to services that operate with a significant purpose to enable young people to get the education and health support they need, including ReachOut's PeerChat, Kids Helpline 'MyCircle' and Google Classroom.
    - OFW provided input into consultations on the proposed legislation and other material, including National Cabinet papers.
- On 30 June 2024, online dating app companies adopted a new industry code to improve safety for Australians.
    - The code commenced on 1 October 2024.
    - The eSafety Commissioner will begin an evaluation of the code after it has operated for 9 months. If the code has not been effective in reducing harms to Australians, the Minister for Communications has indicated the Government will consider whether further action is needed, including regulation.

1. Following National Cabinet on 1 May 2024, the Australian Government announced $6.5 million in 2024-25 to conduct a pilot of age assurance technology to protect children from harmful content, such as

pornography and through social media. The trial of age assurance technologies is due to report by mid-2025.
    - OFW sits on the Age Assurance cross-Government Working Group convened by DITRDCA.
- The Minister for Women is an auxiliary member of the Online Harms Ministers Meeting and was represented at the October 2024 meeting by Padma Raman PSM, OFW Executive Director.
- *For talking points on sexually explicit deepfakes, please refer to the FAS BPB on Artificial Intelligence.*

Date:	17 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Rochelle White
Branch/Section:	Gender Based Violence and Social Policy Branch
Contact Officer:	**s 22(1)(a)(ii)**
Telephone No:	**s 22(1)(a)(ii)**
Consultation:	Department of Social Services

Appendix A – DFSVC roundtables

A list of previous FDSVC roundtables, and OFW's attendance is below.

Date	Topic	OFW attended
2023	Measuring the impact of the National Plan. *Co-convened with ANROWS*	Yes
	Men and healthy masculinity. *Co-convened with No To Violence*	Yes
	Young people's experiences of violence. *Co-convened with the Global Institute for Women's Leadership*	Yes
14 March 2024	Technology facilitated abuse. *Co-convened with the eSafety Commissioner*	Yes
7 May 2024	Murdered and missing women crisis talks.	Yes
10 May 2024	Opportunities relating to governance, measurement and evaluation of the National Plan. *With jurisdictions and co-convened by the NSW Women's Safety Commissioner*	No
11 June 2024	Healing and Recovery. *Co-convened with the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Healing and Recovery Alliance*	No
24 June 2024	Business and gendered violence. *Co-convened with Flequity Ventures*	Yes
19 November 2024	Men and masculinities	Yes

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Subject

The Government recognises the self-determined strengths and aspirations of First Nations women and girls and is committed to working in genuine partnership to ensure the safety of First Nations women and children.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence* to the Department of Social Services (DSS).
- Refer questions on the Senate Inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations women and children to the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

OFW Role

- The Office for Women is working closely with the NIAA and DSS to ensure that measures and policies to improve women's safety are intersectional and consider the self-determined priorities and needs of First Nations women and children.
- The Office for Women is being directly consulted on the standalone First Nations National Plan, *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.*

Key points

- The Government recognises that First Nations women and girls understand what works to keep themselves and their families safe and well.
- The Government is committed to working in genuine partnership to address the disproportionately high rates of violence experienced by First Nations women and children.
- The Government is working in partnership with First Nations women to address immediate safety priorities under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-25.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- This approach is set out in *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* which recognises, as one of its six key principles, that efforts to drive gender equality for First Nations Australians must be led by First Nations Australians.
- Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Government committed to a target to reduce the rate 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, as progress towards zero.
    - Progress against this target cannot be reported as there is no new data since the baseline year of 2018-2019 as relevant gender-based violence questions were not asked in subsequent versions of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS).
    - Currently there is no other National data source capturing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence.
    - In November 2023, the Government announced a $15 million investment in First Nations-led research on domestic and family violence. s 47E(d)
- At the 1 May 2024 National Cabinet First Ministers agreed to maintain a focus on missing and murdered First Nations women and children, and the impact of domestic and family violence in First Nations communities.
    - The package agreed by National Cabinet on 6 September 2024, includes a range of commitments that will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People experiencing violence. (SB25-000080 - Nat Cab GBV and QB25-000013 – First Nations Women refers).

<u>Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence (Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices)</u>

- The Office for Women is working closely with DSS on the development of *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices*, s 47E(d)
    - OFW has been consulted on early drafts.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices* will guide a whole-of-society approach to addressing the unacceptable rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.
- SNAICC – National Voice for our Children was engaged to undertake the public engagement that will inform the development of *Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices*.
- An online public submission process ran from Thursday 5 September – 4 November 2024 with further community, sector and government consultations continuing until March 2025.
- On 15 January 2024, the Government appointed 24 members to the First Nations National Plan Steering Committee, to lead the development of *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices*.

<u>Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children</u>

- On 15 August 2024, the Senate Inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations women and children tabled their report to Parliament, which made 10 recommendations including:
    - the appointment of a First Nations person in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission to advocate for First Nations women and children;
    - implementing culturally sensitive policing approaches, enhancing Family Violence Legal Prevention Services; and
    - enhancing community-led solutions to address the underlying causes of violence and ensure the safety of Indigenous women and children.
- On 25 November 2024, the Australian Government tabled its response to the Senate Inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations Women and Children in Parliament.
    - The findings and recommendations of this important Inquiry will now inform a range of work currently underway to address the disproportionate rates of violence against First Nations women and children.
    - The Response brings greater attention and action to the targets and gender cross-cutting area of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

- Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Government committed to reduce the rate 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, as progress towards zero.
    - Progress against this target cannot be reported as there is no new data since the baseline year of 2018-2019.
- As announced in 2024-25 MYEFO, the Government will invest $2.1 billion over four years from 2024-25 in measures to accelerate progress against socio-economic targets and priority reforms under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and deliver better outcomes for First Nations peoples.
- On 7 February 2024, the Productivity Commission released a Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The review found there is insufficient progress under the National Agreement and all Australian Governments must do better to embed the Priority Reforms.
- The Department of Social Services (DSS) is working to implement the $15 million Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data measure which will enable measurement of progress against Target 13.
    - The complexity of this project has necessitated extensive consultation and scoping and DSS have been working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence to determine the best approach for implementation.

s 47E(d)

National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

- On 26 September 2024, the National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (National Commission) was established as an Executive Agency in accordance with section 65(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth).
- The National Commission commenced operations on 13 January 2025 as a separate and independent entity within the Social Services portfolio.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- Ms Lil Gordon has been appointed as the Acting National Commissioner.
- Ms Gordon will continue to act in the role until the formal appointment process is finalised.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-25

- On 16 August 2023 the Government, in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence, launched a dedicated *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-25* (Action Plan) under the National Plan.
- The Action Plan addresses current safety needs and lays a strong foundation for long-term change with actions to be implemented while Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices is developed to set the policy reform agenda over the longer term.
- In the 2023-24 Budget, the Commonwealth made the biggest single investment of $262.6 million over 5 years from 2022-23 to 2026-27 to implement the Action Plan.

2024-25 MYEFO Investments

- Key investments for First Nations family safety announced during the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet include:
    - $367 million for Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services (an increase of 112 per cent from the Indigenous Advancement Strategy);
    - $838 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (an increase of 64 per cent from the previous National Legal Assistance Partnership); and
    - $81.3 million investment to enhance and expand child-centric trauma-informed supports for children and young people who have experienced or witnessed family, domestic and sexual violence with a specific focus on First Nations children and young people and will prioritise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

2024-25 Budget Investments

- Key investments for First Nations family safety in the 2024-25 Budget include:
  - $11.7 million over two years from 2024-25 to extend the First Nations Family Dispute Resolution pilot to support culturally safe family dispute resolution services.
  - $24.0 million additional funding in 2024-25 under the National Legal Assistance Partnership to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services.
  - $14.2 million over two years from 2024-25 to improve community safety in Alice Springs and surrounding areas.
  - $111.1 million in 2024-25 to maintain delivery of critical services provided under the National Partnership on NT Remote Aboriginal Investment, including health, safety, wellbeing, schooling, and justice services.
- As part of the plan for A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia, the Government is investing:
  - $7.6 million in additional support for women and children experiencing domestic violence and expanding temporary accommodation places; and
  - $30 million to support place-based initiatives to strengthen family and community safety.

Date:	17 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Rochelle White
Branch/Section:	Gender Based Violence and Social Services Branch
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	National Indigenous Australians Agency, Department of Social Services, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commission, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – Social Policy Division

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Supplementary Information

Key Points

- The Government recognises the role of First Nations women and girls as leaders in their communities with remarkable skills, knowledge and expertise.
- The Government and OFW is committed to working in genuine partnership to address the disproportionately high rates of inequality experienced by First Nations women and children and ensure efforts to drive gender equality for First Nations Australians are led by First Nations Australians.
- OFW works collaboratively with the NIAA and other Departments to support coordination across government on policies and programs for First Nations women and girls.

Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality

- *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (the Strategy) considers the diverse needs of all women and girls in Australia, including First Nations women.
    - The Government's implementation of the Strategy is guided by six principles, including that efforts to drive gender equality must be inclusive and intersectional, and that First Nations Australians must lead efforts to achieve gender equality for their communities.
- The Strategy was informed by thorough consultation, including with First Nations women and girls.
- The Strategy complements other frameworks responding to the diverse needs of First Nations women and girls, including the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- Gender-based violence is the first priority area for action under the Strategy, which directly aligns with Target 13 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, families and households are safe.
    - *Target 13: By 2032, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.* The Minister for Women and Minister for Social Services have joint responsibility for this target.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- Health is the fourth priority area for action under the Strategy, and it is noted in the introduction of this section that: 'For First Nations women and girls, the enduring impact of intergenerational trauma and lack of access to culturally safe health care persistently contribute to poorer health outcomes'.

Refer to the Working for Women Back Pocket Brief for more information.

Working for Women Program Grants

- Under the Working for Women Program (WfWP), $31.6 million (GST exclusive) over 2020-21 to 2028-29, spanning 30 projects (including NATSIWA), has been committed to projects which support First Nations women.
- This includes a range of job creation and skills building projects that support and enable First Nations women to become financially independent and where relevant support them to exit violent environments, relationships and situations.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA)

- OFW manages the relationship with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA).
- NATSIWA is funded $1.81 million over 2024-25 to 2028-29 to provide evidence based, intersectional gender equality advice and civil society expertise to government on areas of most impact and influence to the Strategy.

Refer to the Working for Women Grant Program Back Pocket Brief for further information about the National Women's Alliances and WfWP funding.

Health and Wellbeing

- In the 2023–24 Budget, the Government committed $363.1 million over four years to support the Government's commitment to close the gap in First Nations peoples' health and wellbeing outcomes.
- In the 2024–25 Budget, the Government committed to a $137.3 million package of measures to give First Nations people better access to health and aged care services, and cheaper medicines. This includes:
    - $12.5 million over 4 years to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation to facilitate community-led distribution of menstrual products in regional and remote First

Nations communities. This measure is expected to benefit 12,500 First Nations women and girls each year.

- $6.7 million over 2 years from 2024-25 for strategies in participating maternity services and First Nations communities to prevent preterm and early term birth, and monitoring the *National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan 2024-2030.*

- In the 2024–25 MYEFO, the Government committed $9.9 million in 2025-26 to support 10 existing Birthing on Country services to provide continuity of care to First Nations women and babies.

Housing

- On 12 March 2024, the Federal and Northern Territory Governments announced a joint $4 billion dollar investment for housing in remote Northern Territory communities and essential infrastructure on Northern Territory homelands.
- Alongside the release of the 2024 Closing the Gap Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan, on 10 February 2025 the Government announced it will invest to increase opportunities for First Nations Australians to buy their own home and build intergenerational wealth through a boost to Indigenous Business Australia's Home Loan Capital Fund.

Education

- Key investments in the 2024-25 Budget to support education of First Nations women and girls includes:
  - $18 million over two years from 2024-25 to establish the new Central Australian Boarding Response Fund, which will build new and improve existing boarding school facilities in Central Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote Northern Territory communities.
  - On 17 October 2024, the Minister for Indigenous Australians announced this funding would be made available to three Alice Springs Schools: $10 million to Yirara College, up to $6.3 million to Yipirinya School, and up to $1.7 million for St Philip's College.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- On 4 November 2024, the Government announced it will introduce legislation to establish Fee-Free TAFE as an enduring feature of the national vocational education and training system, funding 100,000 Fee-Free TAFE places a year from 2027. Places will be prioritised for a number of priority groups, including First Nations Australians.

Employment and early childhood education and care

- Key investments in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2024–25 (MYEFO) include:
  - $291.2 million over three years from 2025–26 (and $129.0 million per year ongoing) to replace the existing Child Care Subsidy activity test with a new 3 Day Guarantee from January 2026. Families will have access to three days per week (72 hours per fortnight) of subsidised care, and families with First Nations children will have a greater entitlement of 100 hours per fortnight, regardless of parents' level of work, training, study or other activity.
  - $1.0 billion to establish the Building Early Education Fund to increase early childhood education and care places across Australia and drive supply of high quality care. This will include capital grant rounds targeted to priority and underserved markets.
  - $16.9 million over five years from 2024–25 to support development of a First Nations Economic Framework and establish a First Nations Economic Partnership.
- Key investments in the 2024-25 Budget include:
  - $777.4 million over five years from 2023-34 and ($255.5 million per year ongoing) to establish the Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program, which will create 3,000 jobs in remote Australia and support income support recipients move into paid employment.
  - $2.4 million over three years from 2024-25 to finalise and implement the First Nations Teacher Strategy and improve the attraction and retention of First Nations teachers.
- Alongside the release of the 2024 Closing the Gap Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan, on 10 February 2025 the Government announced a place-based business coaching and mentoring program for First Nations businesswomen and entrepreneurs.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Climate Change and Clean Energy

- On 6 December 2024, the Government announced the First Nations Clean Energy Strategy, which has been developed to embed First Nations expertise in the clean energy transition. The Strategy represents a framework to guide investment, influence policy, and support First Nations people to self-determine how they participate in, and benefit from, Australia's clean energy transition.
    - The Strategy includes a commitment to strengths-based and future focussed consideration of women and other cohorts. It also recognises the need to understand the impacts of energy systems on women and other disadvantaged cohorts.

RAPID REVIEW INTO PREVENTION APPROACHES TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Subject/Issue

On 23 August 2024, the final report of the expert panel appointed to undertake the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches to end gender-based violence was publicly released.

OFW role

- The Office for Women (OFW) provided dedicated secretariat support to the Rapid Review panel of experts. (Refer to *Background* for further information on the expert panel appointment and process of the Rapid Review).
- The Office for Women (OFW) in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, is supporting the Women and Women Safety Ministerial Council's (the Council) work to oversee governments' collective responses to the Rapid Review. (Refer to *Comm-State Engagemen*t *BPB* for further information on OFW's role).
- OFW is also working with partner Commonwealth agencies and through Commonwealth-State mechanisms to coordinate and drive progress on outcomes from the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet, which respond to Rapid Review recommendations.

Key points

- On 1 May 2024, following a meeting of the National Cabinet, the Commonwealth announced it would undertake a rapid review of evidence-based approaches to prevent gender-based violence.
- On 23 August 2024, the Rapid Review report, *Unlocking the Prevention Potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence* (the Rapid Review) was publicly released.
    - The reports findings informed the $4.7 billion National Cabinet package announced on 6 September 2024.

<u>Recommendations of the Rapid Review</u>

- The Rapid Review made 21 recommendations, which sit across Commonwealth and state and territory governments and a range of portfolios.
- The Review found that opportunities for prevention of DFSV exist at an individual, community, systems and societal level. Prevention can happen through people, responses, and systems and industries.

- The Review recommended that all governments expand their approach to prevention and leverage all prevention touchpoints more effectively.
- The Review's recommendations identify where violence and abuse can be prevented before it happens, when it occurs and before it becomes fatal.
- The rapid review highlighted a number of areas of priority including:
    - Responding to children and young people's experiences of domestic, family and sexual violence;
    - Engaging with men and boys in violence prevention;
    - Better understanding pathways into perpetration to improve targeting of early intervention initiatives.
- The Rapid Review is intended to build on the considerable work already underway through the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-32 (National Plan), which provides the national policy framework for ending gender-based violence in Australia.

<u>Overseeing the collective Rapid Review response</u>

- On 6 September 2024, National Cabinet agreed to use the Rapid Review to inform strengthened efforts across all governments to deliver the National Plan.
- National Cabinet tasked the Council with overseeing governments' collective responses to Rapid Review and reporting back to National Cabinet on progress by the end of 2025.
    - To drive collective action on the Rapid Review, the Council secretariat is engaging with other ministerial councils in portfolios relevant to different Rapid Review recommendations.
    - This includes the workforce, community services, data and digital, First Nations, justice and policing portfolios.
- The Council will also provide support on the monitoring an implementation of broader women's safety National Cabinet initiatives as part of its role overseeing the National Plan.

<u>Women's safety portfolio approach to the Rapid Review</u>

- The Rapid Review made a number of recommendations that sit within the women's safety portfolio and the Council's jurisdiction.
- As part of the Council's work to use the Rapid Review to inform strengthened efforts in the women's safety portfolio, the Council have identified three priority areas for progress in 2025:
    - **Men's behaviour change** - to address the significant gaps in responses to people who use violence, including improving the

national evidence base, quality, capability and supply of men's behaviour change programs.
    - **Risk assessment** - to better manage risk, including the development and implementation of nationally consistent risk assessment and management principles.
    - **Workforce** - to build the specialist family domestic and sexual violence workforce and to expand the workforce capability of other services and sectors.
- These three areas were identified through Women and Women's Safety Senior Official and the Council, based on where there are opportunities to deliver coordinated action under the National Plan.

Background – Rapid Review appointments and process

Terms of Reference

- The Rapid Review Terms of Reference were published on the PM&C website on 28 May 2024.
    - This included the date of delivery of the final report (15 August 2024).
    - There was a minor and unintentional discrepancy on the website.
    - The PDF version of the Terms of Reference on the website states that the final report would be delivered to the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Women 'by 15 August 2024'.
    - The website landing page states the final report would be delivered to the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Women in the 'third quarter of 2024'.

Expert panel

- On 28 May 2024, the Government announced the appointments of the following members to the expert panel (the Panel):
    - Dr Anne Summers AO
    - Dr Todd Fernando
    - Dr Leigh Gassner APM
    - Ms Elena Campbell
    - Ms Jess Hill
    - Dr Zac Seidler
- The Panel was co-convened by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Ms Micaela Cronin; the Executive Director of the Office for Women, Ms Padma Raman PSM; and the Secretary of the Department of Social Services, Mr Ray Griggs AO CSC.
- The co-convenors provided advice to the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Women on the membership of the panel. The Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Women then recommended the appointments to the Prime Minister.

Costs

- The Government committed $1.3 million in the 2024-25 Budget over two years from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to establish and support the Rapid Review.
    - This included funding to OFW for five short-term staff for six months (2.5 ASL) to establish and support the Rapid Review.
- As at 21 November 2024, the total expenditure is $0.8 million (excluding overheads). The remaining $0.5 million is supporting OFW's work to

progress relevant key recommendations outlined by the expert panel in their final report. This includes:
    - Supporting delivery of the Commonwealth Government's systems abuse audit and providing secretariat support to the Secretaries Working Group on Gender-Based Violence, which is overseeing the audit.
    - As secretariat, supporting the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council to deliver on National Cabinet's tasking to oversee governments' response to the Rapid Review.
    - Supporting whole-of-government coordination efforts towards ending gender-based violence, with a focus on Rapid review recommendations, in addition to OFW's broader role on whole of government coordination.
- Panel members were remunerated up to $1,500 (GST exclusive) per diem for their time, travel and incidental expenses. The remuneration rate was in line with Remuneration Tribunal Amendment Determination (No. 10) 2022, and consistent with payment to members of the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce. As they were non-statutory, the appointments are not subject to consideration by the Remuneration Tribunal.
- Payment schedule:

Total Time	**Daily Fee Payable – GST exclusive**
Less than 2 hours	$600.00 *40 per cent of full daily sitting fee*
2 hours to less than 4 hours	$900.00 *60 per cent of full daily sitting fee*
4 or more hours	$1500.00 *Full daily sitting fee*

<u>Graphic design contract</u>

- OFW engaged Ellis Jones (trading as A Montage Unique Pty Ltd) to design the panel's report.
- Ellis Jones was chosen by OFW following PM&C procurement processes. OFW used the Services Australia Creative and Digital Communication Panel to issue a request for quote s 47E(d) following the evaluation of responses, Ellis Jones was selected.

- Ellis Jones was selected due to their track record producing materials focussed on complex social issues in an accessible and empowering manner for multiple audiences, all within short time frames.
- Ellis Jones was engaged under two contracts with OFW.
    - The first contract ($18, 579 GST inclusive) supported concept development, copy edits and design of the Report.
    - The second contract ($8,921 GST inclusive) supported additional design concept iterations and the creation of Easy Read versions of the Executive Summary and the full Rapid Review report, *Unlocking the Prevention Potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence.*
- The total contract value was $27,500 (GST inclusive).

Supporting research

- The panel was supported by a specifically commissioned stocktake of data on perpetration of family, domestic and sexual violence conducted by the Australian National Research Organisation on Women's Safety (ANROWS), funded by DSS. The Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Bureau of Statistics, and the Australian Institute of Criminology all provided input. This data stocktake is not publicly available. Questions on the data stocktake should be referred to DSS.

Consultation

- The panel undertook targeted stakeholder consultations via a series of roundtables (list of roundtable attendees at Attachment A).
  Refer to SQ24-000032 for QoN with details of the Rapid Review draft work plan and consultations.

Date:	14 Feb 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy
Branch/Section:	**Gender-Based Violence and Social Policy Branch**
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	**Nil**

Attachment A – Expert panel roundtable attendees

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence
- First Nations National Plan Steering Committee
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
- Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
- Commonwealth Government agencies including data agencies
- Communities and frontline services in the Torres Strait Islands
- Domestic, family and sexual violence peak bodies and frontline services
- Key academics with multidisciplinary expertise
- Lived Experience Advisory Council
- National Plan Advisory Group
- National Women's Alliances (Equality Rights Alliance, Harmony Alliance, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance, National Rural Women's Coalition, National Women's Safety Alliance, Women with Disabilities Australia)
- Organisations that work on safety by design in the technology and financial sectors
- Organisations that work with children and young people
- Organisations that work with men and boys
- Organisations that work with migrant and refugee women
- Organisations that work with the LGBTIQA+ community
- Our Watch
- Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
- Women and Women's Safety Senior Officials

Audit of systems abuse in Commonwealth systems

Subject

OFW is leading work to support the coordination and delivery of the audit of Commonwealth systems to identify whether they are being weaponised by perpetrators of family and domestic violence.

Handling Advice

- Refer to *Hot Issues Brief – Audit of Systems Abuse in Commonwealth Government Systems (Systems Abuse).*
- Refer questions on tax to the Treasury.
- Refer questions on social services and child support to the Department of Social Services.
- Refer questions on family law to the Attorney-General's Department.

OFW Role

- OFW is supporting delivery of the systems abuse audit in close partnership with relevant Australian Government departments and agencies.
- OFW provides secretariat support to the Secretaries Working Group on Gender-Based Violence, which oversees the audit.

Key points

- The audit directly responds to recommendation 16 from the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches report.
- The audit aligns with Action 5 under the First Action Plan of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (strengthening systems to better hold perpetrators accountable).
- Under the gender-based violence priority area, *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* commits the government to effective action, including examining systems, to improve women's safety.

Consultation

- OFW undertook targeted consultation to better understand system vulnerabilities, their impact on victim-survivors and opportunities for reform (see Attachment A for list of stakeholders engaged).
- OFW also reviewed a range of academic research, findings of parliamentary inquiries and APS monitoring and evaluation reporting to gather information and analysis on these issues.
- Stakeholders consistently described how the child support, social security, tax, legal and related systems were vulnerable to weaponisation by perpetrators.

- Departments and agencies may conduct their own system-specific consultations while auditing systems or progressing reforms within their portfolios.

Safety by design

- Safety by design principles will guide the design of new government systems and reforms to existing government systems to remove opportunities for abuse or misuse and respond proactively to evolving threats.
- This will be about undertaking realistic, actionable and appropriate measures when designing new systems and to remediate existing systems which may be vulnerable to abuse or misuse.

Implementation status

- The Secretaries Working Group met on 29 October 2024 and 17 December 2024 to discuss progress and implementation of the audit.
- Agencies will report on progress on an ongoing basis via the Secretaries Working Group.
- The allocation of any future funding to support activities identified by the audit is a matter for government.

Public release of the audit and associated documents

- Public communication regarding the findings of the audit and future reforms is a matter for government.
- Appropriate messaging will be crucial to ensure information that could be exploited by perpetrators is not revealed and does not create safety risks for victim-survivors.

Parliamentary inquiry into Financial Services Regulatory Framework in Relation to Financial Abuse (Financial Abuse Inquiry)

- Government will consider recommendations from the Financial Abuse Inquiry and respond in due course.
- OFW, Treasury and the Attorney-General's Department all have recommendations in the report within their portfolio responsibilities.
    - Discussions are underway between agencies on who will lead the government response.

Work underway in the tax system

Refer questions on the tax system to the Treasury.

- The weaponisation of the taxation system is a priority for consideration through the audit.
- **OFW** has been consulted on the Inspector-General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman's review of the identification and management of financial abuse within the tax system.

- The review commenced on 26 November 2024 and the final report is expected to be delivered in March 2025.
- Recommendations arising from this review – where they relate to matters of government policy – will be considered alongside the broader systems abuse work.
- Recommendations relating to the administration of the tax and superannuation systems will be responded to by the Australian Taxation Office.

Work underway in social security and child support systems

Refer questions on social security to the Department of Social Services.

- The social security and child support systems are priorities for consideration through the systems abuse audit.
- The Department of Social Services and Services Australia are undertaking separate reviews of the social security system and Child Support Scheme to identify gaps in assistance and areas that could be exploited to cause harms.
  - To date, **OFW** has not been consulted on this review.
  - The work to review the Child Support Scheme will build on a range of work underway in response to the 2019 Family Law Inquiry.

Work underway in family law system

Refer questions on family law to the Attorney-General's Department.

- The Government recently enacted significant reforms to family law through the *Family Law Amendment Bill 2024* and *Family Law Amendment Act 2023*, which include provisions to reduce opportunities for systems abuse through the family law system.
- **OFW** engaged regularly with the Attorney-General's Department during the design of reforms, including providing gender analysis support.
- The *Family Law Amendment Bill 2024:*
  - addresses a type of systems abuse by providing a safeguard against access to sensitive personal records from health, sexual and family violence services, where they do not have significant value to proceeding.
  - includes a provision to remove the requirement that couples must seek professional assistance (including potentially unsafe and re-traumatising counselling with a perpetrator of DFSV) to consider reconciliation before applying for divorce if they have been married for less than two years.
  - Seeks to remove the requirement that married couples with children must attend court in order to obtain a divorce, which can allow victim-

survivors to avoid potential confronting and distressing experiences of attending court to obtain a divorce.

- The *Family Law Amendment Act 2023* included a new power for courts to address the abuse of legal processes to perpetuate further violence, by allowing a family court to make a 'harmful proceedings order' to prevent ongoing, meritless litigation that may be harmful to a party or a child.

Attachments

Attachment A: Stakeholder Engagement List

Date:	07 Feb 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Rochelle White
Branch/Section:	Gender Based Violence and Social Policy
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	AGD, DSS, Treasury

Attachment A: Stakeholder Engagement List

- Three people with lived experience from the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner's Lived Experience Advisory Council
- Representatives from the National Women's Alliances
    - National Women's Safety Alliance
    - Harmony Alliance
    - Women with Disabilities Australia
    - Reached out to the other NWAs
- Representatives from legal services and legal services peak bodies
    - Economic Justice Australia
    - Federation of Community Legal Centres Vic
    - Community Legal Centres NSW
    - Women's Legal Services Australia
    - Women's Legal Services WA
    - Women's Legal Service Vic
    - Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service
    - Community legal services across NSW and Vic
- Representatives from other peak bodies and groups
    - WESNET (Women's Services Network)
    - Economic Abuse Reference Group
- Academics and experts:



- NSW Women's Safety Commissioner

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Subject/Issue

Workplace sexual harassment is driven by gender inequality and is a form of gender-based violence experienced disproportionately by women.

Key points

- The Government is committed to supporting women who have experienced sexual harassment and preventing sexual harassment by creating safer, respectful and more equitable workplaces.
- Through implementation of the recommendations of the 2020 *Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report* (Respect@Work Report), the Government has:
  - included an explicit prohibition on sexual harassment in the workplace, through the Fair Work Act 2009 (recommendation 28);
  - supported the Human Rights Commission to receive historical disclosures of sexual harassment, educate and enforce compliance from employers on the new positive duty to take reasonable action to prevent workplace sexual harassment, and provide a one stop shop for information and referral services (recommendations 17, 18 and 27);
  - established Working Women's Centres in all states and territories, to provide free advice and assistance to women on issues including workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and wage theft (recommendation 49); and
  - supported consent and respectful relationships education (recommendation 10).
- The last piece of legislative reform to fulfil the Government's commitment to implement the Respect@Work Report was the *Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (Costs Protection) Bill 2023*, passed on 19 September 2024.
  - The amendment implements the Government's response to Recommendation 25 of the Respect@Work report.
  - The amendment prevents a court from ordering an applicant to pay a respondent's costs in discrimination cases in the Federal Court, except in certain limited circumstances.
  - The amendment also ensures courts are able to order an applicant to

pay another party's costs where the applicant has acted vexatiously or unreasonably, to achieve a better balance of the rights and interests of both applicants and respondents.

- The Minister for Women has portfolio responsibility for three Respect@Work recommendations (6, 42 and 43).

- Recommendation 6 - to develop a National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality – has been achieved.
    - Minister Gallagher launched *Working for Women: a Strategy for Gender Equality* on 7 March 2024.
- Recommendations 42 and 43, which OFW and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) supported the Attorney General's Department (AGD) to implement, are also complete.

Refer to WGEA for further information on recommendations 42 and 43.

- On 11 March 2025, the Government approved the Commonwealth *Work, Health and Safety* (*Sexual and Gender-based Harassment) Code of Practice 2025*, which provides practical guidance to employers on meeting their obligations under work, health and safety laws in relation to sexual and gender-based harassment.
    - The Code supports implementation of recommendation 35 of Respect@Work and will be implemented in conjunction with the *Work Health and Safety (Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work) Code of Practice 2024.*

Implementation status of recommendations 6, 42 and 43

Recommendation	Status
Recommendation 6 Deliver a National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality (the National Strategy)	**Implemented** on the launch of *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* by the Minister for Women on 7 March 2024.
Recommendation 42 Work with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) and the Workplace Sexual Harassment Council to consider how development of good practice indicators (Recommendation 46), being led by the Attorney General's Department, may apply to reporting in relation to sexual harassment under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*	**Implemented** upon registration of the *Workplace Gender Equality (Matters in relation to Gender Equality Indicators) Instrument 2023* on 03 February 2023. This means employers required to report to WGEA will now need to report more data on sexual harassment in workplaces.
Recommendation 43a Amend the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, to require public sector organisations with 100 or more employees to report to WGEA on gender equality indicators	**Implemented** upon 12 December 2022 assent of the *Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights* Legislation *Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022*.
Recommendation 43b Fund WGEA adequately to meet these expanded reporting obligations (noting 2023 amendments have been finalised and reporting commences in 2024)	**Implemented** through the 2022-23 March budget.

Background

- The Sex Discrimination Commissioner's Respect@Work Report was released on 5 March 2020 and made 55 recommendations addressed to all levels of government, independent government agencies, the private sector and the community to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.
- The Attorney-General and the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations are leading implementation of the Respect@Work Report at the Commonwealth level.
    - They have partnered with the Ministers for Women, Social Services, Education, Skills and Training, and Health on individual recommendations.
- The Australian Government committed funding through the October 2022 Budget of $42.5 million over four years from 2022-23 to implement report recommendations:
    - $10.5 million over four years to enable the Human Rights Commission to receive historical disclosures of sexual harassment, educate employers about the new positive duty to take reasonable action to prevent workplace sexual harassment and provide a one stop shop for information and referral services (recommendations 17, 18 and 27).
    - $32 million over four years to implement Working Women's Centres in all states and territories, which provide free advice and assistance to women on issues including workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and wage theft (recommendation 49).
    - $83.5 million over six years to implement the Government's consent and respectful relationships election commitment (recommendation 10).
    - $15.1 million over four years to include an explicit prohibition on sexual harassment in the workplace, through the Fair Work Act 2009 (recommendation 28).

Recommendation 25 – costs model

- The Respect@Work report found that applicants are often deterred from proceeding to court with sexual harassment matters because of the risk of having to pay a respondent's costs.
- The Government referred the issue of an appropriate costs model (Recommendation 25) in anti-discrimination proceedings to the Attorney-General's Department for review.
    - This was in recognition of the concerns raised by stakeholders and advocates, and the lack of consensus about the most appropriate costs model.

- On 15 November 2023 the Government introduced the Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (Costs Protection) Bill 2023 which contained a cost protection provision informed by the review.
  - The bill's modified 'equal access' cost protection provision would remove the significant barrier that the risk of an adverse costs order poses for those seeking justice through federal court proceedings for unlawful discrimination matters.

Recommendations 42 and 43 – Workplace Gender Equality Act

- To implement recommendation 42, the Workplace Gender Equality (Matters in relation to Gender Equality Indicators) Instrument 2023 was amended under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (WGE Act). The changes require employers with 100 or more employees, who already report to WGEA, to also report on information about the policies and processes they have concerning sexual harassment in the workplace.
- The Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022 amended the WGE Act on 12 December to implement recommendation 43(a). This ensures the Commonwealth public sector is aligned with public sector organisations with 100 or more employees with obligations under the WGE Act. Since 2023 Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees have been required to report to WGEA against the 6 gender equality indicators.

Recommendation 49 – Working Women's Centres

- The Office for Women (OFW) worked with Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) in the first quarter of 2024 to progress the Government's commitment to establish Working Women's Centres (WWCs) through a grants process.
  - OFW liaised with DEWR on progress of the grants process and provided feedback on the grants process s 47E(d)

s 47E(d)

- The WWCs provide advocacy, advice and support to women on issues including workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and wage theft.
- The first two grant rounds to fund the existing (QLD, NT, SA) and new Working Women's Centres were conducted in April 2024.
- A process was also run to identify a National Body, to facilitate collaboration and coordination of services and advocacy. Applications for the National Body closed on 10 May 2024.

- The grant application and assessment process took place in the first half of 2024. Grant agreements with successful applicants have been in place since June 2024 and grant outcomes have been published on Grant Connect.

- Successful grantees are as follows:
  - Existing Working Women's Centres
    - Qld: Basic Rights Queensland
    - NT: Northern Territory Working Women's Centre Inc
    - SA: Working Women's Centre Inc
  - New Working Women's Centres
    - NSW: Women's Legal Service NSW
    - VIC: South-East Monash Legal Service (in consortium with WestJustice Community Legal Centre, Northern Legal Centre and Women's Legal Service Victoria)
    - WA: Women's Legal Service WA (in consortium with Circle Green Community Legal)
    - TAS: Women's Legal Services Tasmania
    - ACT: Women's Legal Centre ACT (in consortium with Unions ACT)
  - National Body
    - Working Women's Centre Inc (SA)

Further questions on grant funding for Working Women's Centres should be directed to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Recommendation 35 – Code of practice on sexual harassment

Recommendation 35 of the Respect@Work report recommended that work health and safety (WHS) ministers agree to amend model WHS laws to deal with psychological health and develop guidelines and a code of practice on sexual harassment.

On 11 March 2025, the Government approved the Commonwealth *Work, Health and Safety* (*Sexual and Gender-based Harassment) Code of Practice 2025*, which provides practical guidance to employers on meeting their obligations under WHS in relation to sexual and gender-based harassment. The Code gives effect to the model code of practice developed by Safe Work Australia on sexual and gender-based harassment, and was endorsed by all states and territories.

Further questions on the Code of Practice should be directed to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Key facts and figures

- The 2022 survey entitled *Time for Respect: Fifth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian Workplaces* found one in three workers experienced workplace sexual harassment in the last five years.
  - 41 per cent of women and 26 per cent of men reported sexual harassment.
- Deloitte Access Economics modelling undertaken for the Respect@Work Report estimated that in 2018 workplace sexual harassment cost the economy $2.6 billion in lost productivity.
- The Respect@Work Report noted that First Nations people are more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than non-Indigenous Australians (53% compared to 32%).
- The Respect@Work Report also cited that women with a disability are more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than other Australians (52%).
- On 14 November 2024, Unions NSW published *Disrespected, Disregarded and Discarded: Workplace exploitation, sexual harassment and the experience of migrant women living in Australia on temporary visas*. The research surveyed over 3,000 women and conducted 80 in-depth interviews and found that:
  - Over half (51%) of respondents reported experiencing workplace sexual harassment and three quarters (75%) of respondents who experienced harassment did not report it, citing fear of visa cancellation and employer retaliation.
  - ANROWS research (August 2023) found that just under half (46%) of migrant and refugee women had experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in the workplace in the last 5 years in Australia. Women often experienced multiple types or incidences of sexual harassment and consistently perceived gender and race as primary motivations for the harassment.
- Most people who experience sexual harassment never report it due to fear the impact that complaining will have on their reputation, career prospects and relationships within their community or industry.

Date:	24 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Rochelle White
Branch/Section:	AS, GBVSP
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Subject/Issue

The Government is committed to ensuring women and girls have access to the health care they need over their life and has invested significant funding to improve women's health outcomes and access to services.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on detailed policy and Government responses to Parliamentary inquiries to the Department of Health and Aged Care.

OFW Role

- The Office for Women (OFW) supports the Government's ambition to achieve gender equality in health care access and outcomes, as one of 5 key priorities outlined in the Government's strategy for gender equality *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (the Strategy).
- The Strategy works alongside the National *Women's Health Strategy 2020-30* to outline the Government's priorities for women's health.

Key points

- The Australian Government is committed to improving health equity for all women by:
    - Identifying and minimising gender bias in the health care system, including through the introduction of gender responsive budgeting.
    - Addressing the health impacts of violence against women and girls by improving how the health system identifies cases of violence, responds and refers victim survivors to further services; and
    - Addressing the health needs of women in Australia, including protecting and promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and girls in Australia.
        - This is through access to safe, affordable maternal health services, including child birth and pregnancy termination services, as well as access to specialised endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics and contraception and menopausal hormone therapy.
- The Government established the *National Women's Health Advisory Council* in February 2023 to guide implementation of the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–30* and promote better health outcomes for all Australian women and girls.

- The Council has looked at sex and gender bias in the health system across 4 focus areas: safety; research; empowerment; and access, care and outcomes.

9 February 2025 announcement

- The Government announced a $573.3 million women's health package which includes measures for:
  - Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings for Yaz® and Yasmin® oral contraceptive pills;
  - PBS listings for menopause hormone therapies Prometrium®, Estrogel® and Estrogel® Prom to take effect from 1 March 2025;
  - Larger Medicare subsidies and more bulk billing for intrauterine devices and birth control implants;
  - A new Medicare rebate for menopause health assessments, funding to train health professionals, development of clinical guidelines for menopause, and delivering a national awareness campaign;
  - 11 new endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics bringing the total to 33 clinics, with all clinics expanding to also include support for menopause; and
  - A 2 year trial to access over-the-counter contraceptives and treatment for uncomplicated urinary tract infections directly from pharmacies without requiring a script from a GP.

2024–25 MYEFO

- The Government announced investments in women's health and wellbeing, relating to improved access to essential health services and addressing gendered barriers to health in the **2024–25 MYEFO.** It included key investments related to supporting maternal, sexual and reproductive health, the national immunisation program, health care for First Nations women and improved access to mental health care services (see **Attachment A** for a table of measures by key themes).

2024–25 Budget

- The Government invested over $160 million in women's health through the **2024–25 Budget**, including key investments in dementia care, menstrual hygiene, reproductive health, domestic and sexual violence health care, and health care for First Nations women (see **Attachment B** for a table of measures by key themes).

Health impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV)

- Family, domestic and sexual violence can have profound impacts on a woman's physical and mental health.

    - Women who have experienced sexual violence report worse physical and mental health and wellbeing, and have an increased risk of chronic conditions.
    - Pregnancy presents a risky time for the commencement, or escalation, of intimate partner violence.
- OFW is represented on the Mental Health and FDSV Expert Reference Group, which informed a $67.2 million pilot over 4 years, as part of the 2022-23 Budget, of a new model of trauma-informed recovery care, *Supporting Recovery.*
    - This pilot aimed to support the 'Recovery and Healing' domain of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*.
    - The Department of Health and Aged Care funds 6 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) as part of this pilot.
- Additionally, $6 million over 2 years was provided in the 2024–25 Budget to support 6 PHNs regions to provide local outreach trauma-informed health care support for women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence or homelessness.
- An investment of $48.7 million over 4 years from the 2022–23 Budget, implemented by the Department of Health and Aged Care, provides increased support to primary care providers to assist in the early identification and intervention of FDSV and child sexual abuse.

Sexual and reproductive health

Access to termination of pregnancy

- The Government is committed to working alongside states and territories to ensure equitable access to sexual and reproductive health care and to address the underlying factors that limit genuine choice.
- Access to abortion care is a crucial part of health care and the decision to terminate a pregnancy is complex and deeply personal.
- The Commonwealth Government provides support for pregnancy termination services through:
    - Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) rebates for relevant services, including telehealth consultations;
    - Subsidies for the cost of medicines under the PBS; and
    - Public hospital funding.
- Access to pregnancy termination services is a state and territory responsibility and the laws relating to pregnancy termination are a matter for individual jurisdictions.
- Australia's health system provides for safe and legal termination of pregnancies in all states and territories, through a range of public and

private settings including through primary care providers, family planning clinics, women's health clinics, and public and private hospitals.

- Reforms by the Therapeutic Goods Administration has allowed changes to the dispensing and prescribing of the medical abortion drugs mifepristone and misoprostol (MS-2 Step©), including expanding PBS prescription rights to nurse practitioners and midwives (subject to state and territory prescribing rights).
    - This is a significant step in reducing barriers to safe and affordable medical abortions for women, particularly for women in rural and remote areas.
- The National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) is an agreement between all Australian governments through which the Australian Government contributes funds to the states and territories for public hospital services.
    - The NHRA does not contain any provisions relating to the provision of abortion, noting that in general it does not focus on the delivery of particular medical services.
    - The NHRA recognises the states and territories as system managers of public hospitals. As such, the states and territories are responsible for:
        - determining the mix of the services and functions delivered in their jurisdiction; and
        - system-wide public hospital service planning and performance.
- The Medical Board of Australia sets codes and guidelines to guide medical practitioners as to what is appropriate professional conduct. Under the code, medical practitioners are not required to provide or directly participate in treatments to which they conscientiously object. When a doctor refuses to provide a service, they must not let their objections prevent the patient from seeking treatment from another medical practitioner. In some jurisdictions, legislation requires that doctors who do not wish to participate in certain treatments, must refer the patient to another practitioner.
- In 2009, 15% of Australian obstetrics and gynaecology fellows and trainees were conscientious objectors of abortion. Conscientious objection may be higher in regional and rural areas and amongst GPs.

Senate inquiry into universal access to reproductive healthcare

- The Government welcomed the 25 May 2023 report of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, titled *Ending the Postcode Lottery: Addressing barriers to sexual, maternity and reproductive healthcare in Australia*, which contained 36 recommendations and 4 Australian Greens recommendations.

    - Recommendations relate to ensuring timely access to the latest and safest contraceptive methods, options to make contraception more affordable, improved access to medical terminations, and for all public hospitals to provide surgical terminations or timely and affordable alternative pathways to local providers.
- The Government response, tabled 11 February 2025, outlines support for 15 recommendations, in-principle support for 21 recommendations and notes the 4 Australian Greens recommendations. The 4 noted recommendations relate to:
    - providing free contraception for all approved methods;
    - ensuring abortions are provided at no cost nationwide;
    - the harmonisation of pregnancy termination legislation across all Australian jurisdictions; and
    - removing legal barriers to accessing IVF and altruistic surrogacy arrangements.
- OFW will work with relevant agencies to support implementation of the supported recommendations.

Menopause

- The Government welcomed the 18 September 2024 report of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs inquiry into *Issues related to menopause and perimenopause*, which contained 25 recommendations.
- The Government response, tabled 11 February 2025, outlines support for 10 recommendations and in-principle support for 6 recommendations. The remaining 9 recommendations were noted, in addition to noting the recommendation from the Coalition Senators which related to reviewing existing legal frameworks to ensure women can access flexible working arrangements during menopause. The 9 noted recommendations relate to:
    - reviewing the Australian, Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to consider how menopause can be expressly referenced in the menstrual health and reproductive cycles content within the Health and Physical Education learning area;
    - considering amendments to Section 65 of the Fair Work Act 2009 to ensure women can access flexible working arrangements during menopause;
    - Australian workplaces developing perimenopause and menopause workplace policies in consultation with their employees;
    - undertaking further research on the impact and effectiveness of sexual and reproductive health leave;
    - addressing shortages of Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) in the Australian Market;
    - ensuring MHT items are affordable and accessible;

  - the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee including quality of life health impacts as part of their reforms comparator selection during evaluation of new MHT items;
  - the Australasian Menopause Society regularly reviewing and updating their guidance for medical practitioners around best practices in the treatment and management of mental health symptoms; and
  - organisations tasked with improving menopause care utilising learnings from international best practice.
- OFW will work with relevant agencies to support implementation of the supported recommendations.

For further information on the recommendation related to OFW and our role, see SB25-000010—Government response to the Senate inquiry into menopause.

Endometriosis

- As part of the February 2025 announcement, the Government committed to an additional 11 endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics, recognising all existing and new clinics will also provide support for patients experiencing menopause.
- The Government invested $49.1 million in the 2024–25 Budget for the introduction of longer MBS consultation items for patients with complex gynaecological conditions.
  - While this includes endometriosis and pelvic pain as common examples, it also includes a wider range of clinical conditions.
- The 2024–25 Budget and 9 February 2025 announcement also invested in measures to support women's access to long-acting reversible contraceptives, which includes treatment for women experiencing heavy menstrual bleeding and endometriosis (see **Attachment B** for further information).
- The Government committed $17.4 million in the October 2022–23 Budget to establish Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain GP Clinics across Australia.
  - The 22 clinics are located across regional and metropolitan locations to improve access to multi-disciplinary care and are focused on improving diagnostic delay and promoting early access to endometriosis intervention, care and treatment.

Gender bias in the health system

- The Government is alive to the bias that exists in health service delivery and research that leads to women experiencing a range of poorer health outcomes compared to men.
    - For example, as part of the 2024-25 Budget, the Government announced the MBS Review Advisory Committee (MRAC) would undertake an audit of the MBS to understand gender-based differences in MBS items for diagnostic imaging, as part of the MBS Continuous Review. The MBS Continuous Review ensures the MBS continues to support high-quality care, remains flexible, and stays up to date. As part of the review, MRAC engages with stakeholders and subject matter experts and will submit a report of their findings to the Minister for Health and Aged Care.
- Gender bias in the health system is highlighted as an area of focus in the terms of reference of the National Women's Health Advisory Council.
- OFW is working with the Department of Health and Aged Care to ensure proposals brought forward in Budget processes have incorporated gender analysis and do not continue to compound inequality.
- The Government is investing in research into gender bias in the health system, such as funding in the 2023–24 Budget of $26.4 million to extend support for research and data collection, including for the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health.
- The preliminary results of the #endgenderbias survey, run by the National Women's Health Advisory Council in 2023, were released in March 2024. There were 2,570 responses about respondents' own experiences, 86 responses from people responding on behalf of others, and 497 responses from expert stakeholders. The survey found:
    - Two-thirds of women have experienced health care related gender bias or discrimination
    - Almost 80 per cent of caregivers reported that a person they cared for had similar experiences
    - Gender bias was experienced most in relation to sexual and reproductive health and chronic pain.
- The detailed report of the #endgenderbias survey was released on 20 January 2025. It includes the same findings as the summary report, but also provides detail about what participants said in respect of:
    - interpersonal gender bias
    - structural barriers with gendered aspects
    - gender bias in evidence, and
    - intersectional perspective to gender bias.
- The annual report for the National Women's Health Advisory Council was published on 18 December 2024 and covers the Council's work since inception in February 2023 until June 2024.

First Nations women's health

- First Nations women and girls are more likely to experience significantly poorer health and health outcomes than non-Indigenous women and girls.[1]
- Key investments in First Nations women's health in the 2024–25 Budget include:
    - $12.5 million over 4 years to provide free menstrual hygiene products to rural and remote First Nations communities.
    - $5.8 million over 2 years from 2024–25 to continue strategies to prevent preterm and early-term birth and reduce the number of babies born too early in participating maternity services and First Nations communities.
    - $126.5 million over 2 years from 2024–25 to extend and expand activities to support the prevention, testing and treatment of blood-borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections, including support for First Nations communicable disease services.
        - Indigenous women experience higher rates of chlamydia and gonorrhoea than Indigenous men and non-Indigenous women and men.[2]
    - $3.5 million over 4 years from 2024–25 (and $0.4 million per year ongoing) to expand the Midwife Professional Indemnity Scheme to include indemnity insurance cover for privately practicing midwives providing low-risk homebirths and intrapartum care outside of a hospital, and for specified entities providing Birthing on Country models of care.
- In the 2023–24 Budget, the Government committed $363.1 million over 4 years to support the Government's commitment to close the gap in First Nations peoples' health and wellbeing outcomes.

Dementia

- Dementia is the second leading cause of death for Australians and the leading cause of death of women.[3]
- Relevant investment in the 2024–25 Budget included:
    - $65.6 million to continue to reform and strengthen the aged care workforce, which will support the provision of high-quality care to people with dementia.
    - $30.4 million over 3 years from 2024–25 to states and territories to continue to deliver the Specialist Dementia Care Program.

[1] *National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030.*
[2] HIV, hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework
[3] Causes of Death, Australia, 2023 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

    - $1.7 million in 2024–25 for the Australian Dementia Network to continue preparing the health system for developments in biomarkers and disease-modifying therapies.
- Key measures from the 2023–24 Budget that will assist with addressing dementia included:
    - $112 million for Australians living in residential aged care to receive more regular visits, health assessments and care planning through additional incentive payments to GPs and primary care clinics.
    - $166.8 million for additional Home Care Packages.

Key facts and figures

- Australian women born in 2020–2022 can expect to live around 4 years longer than men (85.3 years compared to 81.2 years).[4]
- In 2023, the leading cause of death for Australian women was dementia, including Alzheimer's disease (10,574 or 12.2% of deaths).[5] Women make up 63 per cent of people living with dementia.[6]
    - This was followed by ischaemic heart disease (6,579 or 7.6% of deaths); cerebrovascular disease (5,263); chronic lower respiratory diseases (4,144); lung cancer (3,782); breast cancer (3,215); and diabetes (2,654).
    - This compares to men, whose leading cause of death was ischaemic heart disease (10,343 or 10.8% of deaths); dementia including Alzheimer's disease (6,111 of 6.4% of deaths); lung cancer (5,194); chronic lower respiratory diseases (4,215); and cerebrovascular disease (4,096).
- Coronary heart disease is the second leading cause of death for women, yet women are likely to have less recognised or atypical symptoms of coronary heart disease.
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in women, followed by breast cancer.
    - Women are more likely to have asymptomatic presentations and experience a wider range of types of lung cancer than men, which can lead to women being under-diagnosed or misdiagnosed.
- Women at all stages of life are at greater risk than men of mental ill health. Women experience mental health disorders such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety at higher rates than men.

[4] ABS, Life expectancy 2020-2022, latest release
[5] ABS, 3303.0 Causes of Death, Australia, 2022, latest release, Table 1
[6] Dementia in Australia, Prevalence of dementia - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

- While women are more likely to intentionally self-harm, men have higher rates of suicide than women. In 2023, there were 2,419 suicide deaths of men (18.0 per 100,000 population) and 795 suicide deaths of women (5.8 per 100,000 population).[7]
- The National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing (2020–22) indicates that young people had the highest prevalence of mental disorder of all age groups, with 38.8 per cent of young people aged 16-24 experiencing a 12-month mental disorder. Almost half of young women (45.5 per cent) aged 16-24 years had a 12 month mental disorder.[8]

Attachments

Attachment A: 2024–25 MYEFO measures by focus area
Attachment B: 2024–25 Budget measures by focus area

Date:	17 Feb 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Rochelle White
Branch/Section:	Gender Based Violence and Social Policy Branch
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Mental Health, Hospitals and First Nations Health; Population Health, Primary Care and Sport

[7] ABS, Causes of Death, Australia 2022, Intentional self-harm deaths (Suicide) in Australia
[8] National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2020-2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

Attachment A—*2024–25 MYEFO measures by focus area*

National Immunisation Program

- $174.5 million over 4 years from 2024–25 (and $44.4 million per year ongoing) to add a maternal respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine to the National Immunisation Program (NIP), with all pregnant women between 28 and 36 weeks eligible for vaccination.

Pregnancy, sexual and reproductive health

- $5.3 million in 2025–26 to support perinatal mental health screening across public antenatal and postnatal care settings.
- $4.8 million in 2025–26 to support bereaved parents by maintaining the number of perinatal pathologists to perform stillbirth autopsies and the perinatal loss workforce.
- $5.1 million in 2025–26 to continue delivery of the Every Moment Matters awareness campaign, to support women who are planning pregnancy to achieve alcohol-free pregnancies
- $3.1 million in 2025–26 to extend the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood's role to continue providing pasteurised donor human milk to premature babies in neonatal intensive care units or special care units across the hospital network
- $2.6 million in 2025–26 to continue support for the Australian Breastfeeding Association's National Breastfeeding Helpline, to provide a free-call service on breastfeeding to women and their families
- $2.3 million in 2025–26 to extend a range of actions to reduce the stillbirth rate in Australia and to ensure high quality care is provided to families who experience stillbirth
- $0.6 million in 2025–26 to the University of New South Wales for the maintenance and improvement of the YourIVFSuccess website, to support Australian couples with independent.

First Nations

- $9.9 million in 2025–26 to support 10 existing Birthing on Country services to provide continuity of care to First Nations women and babies.

Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS)

- $246.9 million in additional funding to support access to Medicare services through the MBS.

Mental Health

- $272.1 million over 2 years to extend the Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Program for a further two years to ensure 25,000 Australians with severe mental illness can continue to receive day-to-day living supports.

Other

- Listing trastuzumab deruxtecan (Enhertu®) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for the treatment of human epidermal growth factor receptor 2-low unresectable or metastatic breast cancer
- Listing dienogest (Visanne®) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for the treatment of endometriosis.

Attachment B—*2024–25 Budget measures by focus area*

Menstrual hygiene, miscarriage and contraception

- $12.5 million over 4 years to provide free menstrual hygiene products to rural and remote First Nations communities.
- $7.0 million over 4 years for the development of miscarriage education and awareness resources, including a public awareness and education program and delivery of bereavement care services.
- $0.9 million over 2 years to continue to monitor activities under the national stillbirth action plan.
- $5.2 million over 3 years to support scholarships for health professionals to undertake training to support women to access long-acting reversible contraceptives.
- $1.1 million over 4 years to develop and maintain a virtual interactive contraception decision tree.

Pregnancy, sexual and reproductive health

- $56.5 million to implement the remaining recommendations from the *MBS Review Taskforce – Participating Midwives* report, to promote flexible, high-quality and tailored maternity care.
- $5.8 million over 2 years to prevent and safely reduce pre-term births, including in First Nations communities.
- $5.0 million over 2 years to continue the Every Moment Matters awareness campaign to reduce the incidence of babies born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
- $3.5 million over 4 years to provide privately practising midwives access to professional indemnity insurance, covering low-risk home births and intrapartum care outside a hospital, and supporting ongoing delivery of Birthing on Country programs
- Up to $25 million over 4 years for research into women's health, including menopause, pregnancy loss and infertility through the 2024 Infertility, Pregnancy Loss and Menopause grant opportunity.
- $49.1 million to add longer specialist gynaecological consultation items to the MBS, supporting women with complex conditions such as endometriosis, chronic pelvic pain and polycystic ovary syndrome.
- $8.0 million over 3 years for data and evaluation activities on sexual and reproductive health, miscarriages, and an evaluation of early pregnancy assessment centres.
- $1.2 million over 2 years to support training for health practitioners to better treat, care for and manage women's health during menopause.

Family, domestic and sexual violence

- $6.0 million over 2 years to support PHNs on the central cost to provide trauma-informed health care to women and children experiencing domestic and sexual violence.

First Nations

- $126.5 million over 2 years to extend and expand activities to support the prevention, testing and treatment of bloodborne viruses and sexually transmissible infections, including support for First Nations communicable disease services.

Dementia

- $65.6 million to continue to reform and strengthen the aged care workforce, which will support the provision of high-quality care to people with dementia.
- $30.4 million over 3 years to states and territories to deliver the Specialist Dementia Care Program.
- $1.7 million for the Australian Dementia Network to continue preparing the health system for developments in biomarkers and disease-modifying therapies.

Other

- Expanding the listing for abemaciclib (Verzenio®) on the PBS for the treatment of HR+, HER- and early breast cancer.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WOMEN'S HEALTH
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

UPDATE TO WOMEN'S HEALTH BPB

Addition to Key points

Updated figures on Women's Health Package

- The $792.9 million women's health package announced as part of the 2025-26 Budget includes the measures announced on 9 February (see p 2 of BPB) and also provides for several additional measures, including:
    - the listing of additional contraceptives and treatments for moderate to severe endometriosis on the PBS such as Slinda® and Ryeqo®
    - $10 million to the NSW Government to improve maternity services at Central Coast Hospitals (Gosford and Wyong), along with workforce support and training
    - $6 million to the Tasmanian Government to support maternity services in Hobart.

23 February 2025 announcement[1]

- The Government announced a $7.9 billion funding package to expand eligibility for more bulk billing to Strengthen Medicare.
    - From 1 November 2025, general practitioners (GPs) will be able to claim bulk billing incentive items when they bulk bill any Medicare -eligible patient.
        - GPs were previously only able to claim bulk billing incentives when bulk billing children under the age of 16 and Commonwealth Concession Card holders.
- From 1 November 2025, the Government will also launch a new Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program. Participating practitioners will receive an additional 12.5% loading payment on every $1 of Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) benefit earned from GP non-referred attendance (NRA) services, split between the GP and the practice.
- Both measures announced on 23 February 2025 will provide women with more equitable access to healthcare at no additional cost.
    - The announcement is particularly helpful for women as they are more likely to visit the GP compared to men (90% compared to

[1] Information is from the Department of Health announcement Strengthening Medicare with more bulk billing

82% respectively)[2] and more likely to be diagnosed with a chronic illness.[3]

[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) *General Practice, allied health and other primary care services*. Accessed 17 March 2025. General practice, allied health and other primary care services - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) *Health conditions prevalence*. Accessed 17 March 2025. Health conditions prevalence, 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF – APS Gender Analysis Capability
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

APS Gender Analysis Capability

Subject

The Office for Women (OFW) delivers guidance materials and other resources to uplift gender analysis capability across the Australian Public Service (APS).

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on the *Developing Capability through Microcredentials Project* to the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC).

OFW Role

- OFW is continuing to uplift gender analysis capability across the APS, to support the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*.

Key points

- While OFW is leading work to uplift gender analysis capability, it is the responsibility of all departments to ensure they have the skills and capabilities needed to deliver gender analysis, and meet the GRB requirements outlined in the Budget Process Operational Rules (BPORs).
- To date, OFW has driven the following key capability uplift efforts:
    - Produced and published formal guidance on gender analysis – *Including Gender: An APS Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Impact Assessment* (the Guide) and the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) template.
    - Developed practical resources and tools to better support policy officers and departments to conduct gender analysis. Including establishing and managing an APS Gender Analysis Community of Practice, which launched on 30 May 2024.
    - Delivered 39 presentations across the APS on GRB and use of the Guide (as at 21 March 2025).
    - Rolled out the Gender Awareness Foundations eLearning Course, developed by the Equality Institute. The course went live on 11 January 2024 and is available until 31 March 2025.
    - Partnered with the APS Academy and University of New South Wales (UNSW) to co-design a microcredential course to build gender analysis capability.

<u>Gender Awareness E-learning course</u>

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF – APS Gender Analysis Capability

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

- OFW engaged the Equality Institute (EQI) to deliver a *Gender Equality Awareness Foundations e-learning course* in 2024.
    - EQI are an expert in the field of gender equality, with a sound reputation for working with government, including working with the Victorian Government on the development of its GIA Toolkit.
    - Utilising an existing EQI product provided economies of scale and value for money, with the course being updated to ensure it meets the needs of the APS.
- The course was developed in consultation with PM&C (Communications, People Branch, Entry Level Programs), the APSC, the Reform Office and select APS departments.
- The training provided an introduction to key concepts that underpin gender analysis, including how gender norms contribute to inequality and why considering gendered impacts is important in policy development.
- It is aimed at all APS staff and is available for free until 31 March 2025.
- As at 21 March 2025, 880 APS staff have registered for the course.

Attachments

Attachment A: Overview of all capability projects

Date:	X Feb 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy
Branch/Section:	GESP / Gender Analysis Capability
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	APSC

Attachment A: Capability Projects Overview

	Project	Delivery	Contract and funding	Further detail
Ongoing	**EQI Gender Awareness Foundations e-Learning** A 1 hour online training course introducing basic concepts of gender, equality, intersectionality and their relationship to policy making. After launching January 2024, the course is currently available to APS staff, with 3000 licenses purchased. **Next step:** Manage and monitor APS participation in the course throughout until it ceases on 31 March 2025.	January 2024 – March 2025	**CON number:** CD011557 **Supplier:** The Equality Institute (EQI) **Value:** $96,400 (ex GST) or $106,040 (inc GST) **Duration:** April 2023 – 30 June 2024 (9 month extension to 31 March 2025) **Source:** October 2022-23 Budget	• Limited tender (direct source) using Small to Medium Enterprise exemption. • Market research found no suitable suppliers on existing panels and limited options in the market. • EQI offered a unique combination of expertise in gender analysis implementation (through work with the Victorian State government) and online training delivery. • EQI had an existing product informed by research, which had been tested with numerous organisations and was readily adaptable for the APS. This enabled a lower cost and more rapid deployment of training than developing something new. • Cost: Equates to $30 per participant, which market research indicated was consistent with comparable services. • As at 21 March 2025, 880 APS staff had enrolled in the course.
	APSC Microcredentials Project: Crafting Inclusive Policy for Gender Equality A short course in gender analysis (50 hours) equivalent to part of a post-grad tertiary unit. The pilot was co-designed and delivered with the APSC and University of New South Wales (UNSW).	APSC piloted the course through April and May 2024. Evaluation activities completed 30 September 2024. Ongoing delivery through UNSW from early 2025.	**Funding:** $91,000 (0.5FTE) for OFW **Duration:** 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 (development project) **Source:** 2023-24 Budget – APS Capability Reinvestment Fund	• Development project and ongoing access **managed by APSC.** • Project included development of 3 micro-credential courses, focused on gender analysis, foresight techniques and tools, and cultural understanding of the Pacific. • OFW was funded to co-design the gender analysis micro-credential and provide gender analysis expertise. • APSC procured **UNSW** to develop, pilot and deliver the course. • April to May 2024: UNSW piloted the course with 24 APS staff. • Evaluation was completed September 2024, with participants noting improved capability in gender analysis and understanding of gender responsive budgeting. • UNSW will continue to deliver the microcredential on a cost for service basis ($1650 per person) from early 2025. • APS staff can access the course through APS Academy, as well as directly at UNSW.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF – APS Gender Analysis Capability

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

	APS Gender Analysis Community of Practice A central online hub for all information and guidance relating to gender analysis. The platform includes publicly available and APS-restricted gender analysis guidance, resources, events and training. It is accessible to APS employees only.	May 2024 - ongoing	OFW BAU	• Developed as part of the NextGEN project (see completed items). • As at 21 March 2025, the platform had around 535 members. • Platform hosts GIA reference materials, resources, data, recorded presentations, training links and access to events.
	Departmental information sessions and presentations Presentations delivered by OFW on the Guide, GIA process and how to conduct gender analysis.	August 2023 – ongoing	OFW BAU	• As at 21 March 2025, 39 presentations have been delivered to OFW, PM&C (PIP, SPG, Cabinet Division, Fiscal Policy, Graduate program co-hort), APSC, DAFF, DCCEEW, DEWR, DFAT, DHAC, DISR, DITRDCA, DSS, Education, Home Affairs, NIAA, and the Crawford course participants and ASEAN Taskforce.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF – APS Gender Analysis Capability

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

	Project	Delivery	Contract and funding	Key facts and procurement
Completed	**NextGEN: Policy for a Gender Equal Nation project** A co-design project with DEWR and Education to develop gender analysis resources and tools to: • Build the capability of APS staff, including their use of intersectional data and evidence • Ensure departments are equipped to support gender analysis. Nous Group (Nous) was procured to support delivery of the project.	1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024	**Funding:** $1,340,000 ex GST total • OFW received $970,000 total: – $570,000 for staff (2.5 FTE). – $326,039 (ex GST) or $364,143 (inc GST) for Strategic Review and Advice Services ▪ Supplier: Nous Group ▪ CON number: CD012013 ▪ Contract duration: 15 Feb – 30 June 2024 – $5,000 for travel and admin. • $370,000 total to DEWR and Education – $185,000 each, 1 FTE each **Duration:** 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 **Source:** 2023-24 Budget – APS Capability Reinvestment Fund	• **Project led by OFW**, in partnership with **DEWR** and **Education**, and with support from **Nous Group**. • Nous were secured through an open tender RFQ process, using the research evaluation services panel (SON3352211). • s 47E(d) an evaluation panel undertook an assessment process that found Nous Group the most suitable supplier. • Resources and tools developed through this project were made available to the APS in mid-2024. They are hosted on the APS Gender Analysis Community of Practice, which will be managed in an ongoing capacity by OFW (see ongoing items).

	ANU Gender Analysis Short Course A targeted training course on theoretical underpinnings and skills needed for gender analysis. The course was available to staff in PM&C, Treasury and Finance who were responsible for guiding policy proposals through the Budget process, as well as targeted other departments with a strong interest.	June – August 2023	**CON number:** CD011587 **Supplier:** ANU Crawford School of Public Policy Executive Education (ANU) **Value:** $69,940 (ex GST) or $76,934 (inc GST) **Duration:** April 2023 – November 2023 **Source:** October 2022-23 Budget	• Limited tender (direct source) under $80,000. • ANU revised training previously developed by Professor Miranda Stewart to save cost and time, and to draw on existing expert material. • Course developed and delivered by leading academics: Professor Stewart, Dr Leonora Risse and Dr Elise Klein • From June to August 2023: Online delivery, with 78 participants from 8 departments (PM&C, Treasury, Finance, DSS, NIAA, DAFF, DISR, Education and DEWR). • Cost: $932 per participant (less than standard fee of $1,495). • Evaluation findings were positive and respondents offered considered feedback and suggestions for improvement. It highlighted that the course: – largely met the expectations of the participants (67%) – was engaging (79%) and relevant (79%) – encouraged new ways of thinking (78%) – provided them with skills relevant to their work (76%)
	OFW Pilot Secondment Program An application-based program that offered 3-12 month placements in OFW and was open to APS staff. It aimed to build gender analysis capability for secondees to share with their home agency, and also broaden perspectives and expertise in OFW.	First round: October 2022 Second round: May 2023	OFW BAU – Pilot complete	• Round One commenced from October 2022, applicants were sought at an EL1/EL2 level. – Eight secondments and one temporary transfer from 7 agencies (Home Affairs; Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Defence; Industry, Science and Resources; Foreign Affairs & Trade; Social Services; and Treasury). • Round Two commenced from May 2023, and applicants were sought at the APS 4-6 levels. – Nine secondments from 6 agencies (Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; Veterans' Affairs; Home Affairs; Finance; Social Services; and Federal Court). • Evaluation determined the program was not a cost effective approach to ongoing capability development, however OFW maintains internal guidance resources to support future OFW secondment opportunities where required.

WORKING FOR WOMEN

Subject/Issue

On 7 March 2024, the Government released *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (the Strategy), outlining its vision for gender equality.

Handling Advice

- N/A

OFW Role

- The Office for Women (OFW) developed the whole-of-government Strategy, which was informed by advice and feedback from the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce (WEET), the National Women's Alliances, key government and non-government stakeholders, and businesses.
- OFW monitors and coordinates whole-of-Government implementation of the Strategy and reports on progress under the five key priority areas.

Key points

- The Strategy focusses on five priority areas, gender-based violence; paid and unpaid care; economic equality and security; health; and leadership, representation and decision-making.
    - It also outlines the need for everyone to work together to shift the attitudes and stereotypes that drive gender inequality.
- To inform the Strategy, the Government consulted with over 3,000 people around Australia to ensure their diverse voices were heard and included.
- The Strategy was agreed by Government through Cabinet processes.

Strategy: Implementation

- During the 2024-25 Budget and 2024-25 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), the Government announced a range of new measures that contribute to implementation of the Strategy, building on the significant investments already made to improve the lives of women and advance gender equality. This includes:
    - Establishing the *Working for Women Program* (WfWP) to fund key partnerships to continue to engage with and listen to women and the community about where action is needed.

Refer to the Grants and Alliances Backpocket Brief for more information.

- Introduction of a Panel Supplier Portal, a public, searchable supplier register able to identify women-owned and led business. The register will also track and monitor Government contracts being awarded to women-owned and led businesses, and allow these businesses to register their willingness to supply to government.
  - Finance has undertaken preliminary stakeholder consultations and will shortly commence detailed scoping and design of the Panel Supplier Portal, with the aim of commencing implementation by mid-2025.

Refer further questions to the Department of Finance.

- Strengthening the approach to women's leadership by setting new targets to increase representation of women on Australian Government boards.

Refer to the Women in Honours and Leadership Brief for more information.

Refer to the Investments in Women Hot Issues Brief for more information.

Gender Responsive Budgeting

Refer to the Gender Responsive Budget Hot Issues Brief for more information.

- The Government will continue to invest in policies that will have tangible impacts on women and men's lives over the 10 years of the Strategy, guided by the Strategy and the recommendations of the WEET.
  - The Government's agreement to practical steps to accelerate action to end gender-based violence at the National Cabinet meeting on 6 September 2024 progresses work under Strategy priorities.
- Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a key tool to implement the Strategy. By embedding consideration of gender impacts through Budget processes, Government can make informed and practical decisions that close gender gaps and improve the lives of women and men.
  - It is the responsibility of each Department and agency to drive gender equality through their own policies and programs.
  - The Budget Process Operational Rules (BPORS) outline that advancing gender equality is one of a number of 'core budget and policy development objectives' that also includes *ensuring quality expenditure and responsible budget management* (BPORs, p. 3)

- Publicly available guidance to the APS on applying GRB practices (such as gender analysis) states that it *should be targeted and proportional, ensuring that the effort in conducting an analysis is proportional to the potential impact, value and scope of the policy*. (*Including Gender*, 2025, p. 2)
  - Departments apply the requirements of GRB based on their assessment of individual policy proposals.
  - The criteria for a more comprehensive Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) have been designed to identify proposals that can have an impact on gender equality. For example, the 'workforce' criteria for GIA applies when a proposal relates to a gender segregated industry.
  - As *Including Gender: An APS Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Impact Assessment* says, '…Where a policy will have a negative impact on gender equality, gender analysis can help policy makers identify risk mitigations. For example, if a large amount of funding is being provided to a male-dominated workforce and risks reinforcing inequalities like the gender pay gap, there may be opportunity to boost women's participation as part of the policy.' (page 9).
  - This supports a number of priority areas in *Working for Women*, in particular, economic equality and security.

Strategy: Governance

- The Strategy's implementation is monitored by a range of governance fora designed to drive action, including:
  - The Working for Women Implementation Interdepartmental Committee (IDC), designed to be a forum for strategic advice, policy development, implementation coordination and reporting, and to help drive implementation of GRB.
  - The Working for Women Strategy Group, comprised of senior Commonwealth Government office holders with gender focus and responsibilities, to provide strategic advice and collaborate under the Strategy.

See Attachment A: Working for Women A Strategy for Gender Equality Placemat for membership and meeting frequency.

Strategy: Reporting

- Government will measure and report on gender equality outcomes, by:

- highlighting key outcomes and indicators in the **Status of Women Report Card**, a publicly available report released by the Government each year around International Women's Day
- outlining investments Government is making to support progress on gender equality through the **Women's Budget Statement** each year
- requiring departments to report on their efforts to improve gender equality through their **Annual Reports**.
  - OFW is stewarding the implementation of gender equality annual reporting through a phased approach in 2024-25 and 2025-26.
  - OFW is working with the Department of Finance and Commonwealth Departments to implement a consistent approach for reporting on gender equality in Commonwealth Annual Reports.
  - 2024-25 reporting will be a limited pilot of the reporting requirement by four departments:
    - Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
    - Department of Industry, Science and Resources
    - Department of Education
    - Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.
  - Pilot departments have demonstrated a commitment to progressing gender equality, supporting the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting, and building the gender analysis capability of their workforce. They were invited to participate to share these achievements and provide expertise to inform the development of the reporting requirement.
  - Development of the 2024-25 pilot is underway and next steps include:
    - Consulting with pilot departments to finalise the standards and scope for the 2024-25 pilot reporting requirement.
    - Developing supporting guidance to assist pilot departments to include gender equality reporting in their 2024-25 annual reports.
  - Implementation and outcomes of the pilot will inform gender equality annual reporting requirements from 2025-26, with the

ongoing implementation approach to be agreed by Government at the conclusion of the pilot.

- The Strategy's Reporting Framework will be used to track and report on its impacts and progress over time.
  - A Baseline Data Report was launched on 1 November 2024 and will be used to measure progress.
    - This report includes publicly available data sources for each indicator in the Strategy as of March 2024, providing a point in time reference.
  - Formal reviews will be undertaken at the mid-point (2029) and end-point (2034) of the Strategy.

Strategy: Data

- The Strategy commits the Australian Government to building the evidence base on gender equality.
- High quality, accurate and timely gender-disaggregated and intersectional data enables the implementation of gender responsive budgeting and gender informed policy development.
- The Government is currently developing a Gender Data Action Plan (GDAP) to improve gender disaggregated holdings and use of data to inform evidence-based policy to drive gender equality outcomes.
  - Implementation of the GDAP is overseen by the Gender Data Steering Group (GDSG), consisting of representatives from across Government agencies with significant data holdings.
  - The GDSG was established to maximise the impact of the Government's major data holdings as an evidence-base for gender equality policy. It was also a response to Recommendation 1.2 of the 2021 Workplace Gender Equality Act Review.
  - The GDAP will be informed by the recommendations provided by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and WEET.
- Data availability impacted the content of the Strategy – intersectional data and data disaggregated beyond binary gender definitions are limited.
  - This impacts our ability to measure all people's experiences of inequality.
  - The Government is committed to continually improving intersectionality of data, including through the implementation of the

ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables.

- As intersectional data becomes available, it will be incorporated into the Strategy's reporting tools, to measure gender equality for diverse cohorts of people.
- Gender responsive budgeting encourages policy makers to identify data gaps and opportunities to strengthen the gender and sex disaggregation of existing data collections.

Strategy: Intersectionality

- For many people in Australia, their experience of gender inequality can be compounded by the way gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors such as race, class, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability.
  - To achieve equality and respect for all women, gender inequality cannot be seen as separate from other forms of discrimination and disadvantage that women face.
- The Strategy considers the diverse needs of all women and girls in Australia. Some examples of specific areas identified for action for women that experience heightened barriers to equality include:
  - considering improvements to how the family law system responds to victim-survivors, including ensuring cultural safety for First Nations victim-survivors
  - ensuring employment services systems such as Disability Employment Services support women's economic participation; and
  - improving culturally responsive health services and support for First Nations women and culturally and linguistically diverse women.

Strategy: First Nations gender equality

- The Strategy recognises that there are a range of different experiences across the community and includes a principle that efforts to drive gender equality for First Nations Australians must be led by First Nations Australians.
- OFW engaged with key stakeholders to determine how best to recognise First Nations peoples' experiences in the Strategy.
  - This included working with the National Indigenous Affairs Agency and Australian Human Rights Commission to understand the opportunities to leverage the extensive work of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani project, led

by former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO, without duplicating this work.

- OFW participated in the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Advisory Group to support alignment between the Strategy and the Change Agenda where possible.

- The Strategy is consistent with the cross-cutting outcome area of gender and sexuality under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement).
- The Strategy's reporting framework identifies key indicators under two outcomes that align with targets (indicators) and outcomes of the National Agreement.
  - Outcome 1.1: All people live free from violence and are safe at home, at school, at work, in the community and online
    - Indicator 1.1.3: A reduction in the rate of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children
  - Outcome 4.1: The health care system recognises and is responsive to gendered health issues and provides women and men with increased access to information, diagnosis, treatment and services
    - Indicator 4.1.2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives
    - Indicator 4.1.3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong
    - Indicator 4.1.4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Working for Women**
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Background

N/A

Attachments

Attachment A – Working for Women A Strategy for Gender Equality placemat

Date:	24 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy
Branch/Section:	Gender Equality Systems and Partnerships Branch
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Gender Analysis Capability Team

FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF: WORKING FOR WOMEN: A STRATEGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY PLACEMAT – KEY INFORMATION

Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality (the Strategy) outlines the Australian Government's vision for gender equality – **an Australia where people are safe, treated with respect, have choices, and have access to resources and equal outcomes no matter their gender.** The Strategy sets out a path to work towards the Government's vision for gender equality over the next 10 years, and Working for Women outlines how **harmful gender attitudes and stereotypes are the foundation** of gender inequality and sets out **five priority areas** for action:

- Priority Area 1: Gender-based violence
- Priority Area 2: Unpaid and paid care
- Priority Area 3: Economic equality and security
- Priority Area 4: Health
- Priority Area 5: Leadership, representation and decision-making

Under the Strategy there is currently:

- **27** actions underway
- **29** continuing actions
- **33** directions for future effort

Implementation

The Strategy will be implemented over time, with priorities informing government decisions at Budget and other key decision milestones.

Alongside the launch of the Strategy, the Government announced these measures:

- committing to **pay superannuation payments** on Government-funded Paid Parental Leave for births and adoptions on or after 1 July 2025.
- establishing a new **voluntary Commonwealth supplier registration** process in AusTender to identify women-owned and led businesses. This will encourage consideration of gender equality outcomes in **procurement**, and give Government the ability to measure and analyse women-owned and led businesses the Commonwealth is contracting with.
- strengthening our approach to women's leadership by setting **new targets to increase representation of women on Australian Government boards.**
- establishing **partnerships to continue to engage with and listen to women and the community** about where action is needed.

Reporting

- The Strategy outlines the ways that Government will measure and report on gender equality outcomes, these include:
  - highlighting key outcomes and indicators in the **Status of Women Report Card**, released each year on International Women's Day.
  - outlining the investments Government is making to support progress on gender equality through the **Women's Budget Statement** each year.
  - requiring departments to report on their efforts to improve gender equality through their **Annual Reports**.
- The Strategy's **reporting framework** includes key outcomes under each foundation and priority. The reporting framework also includes 'indicators' and 'actions to drive the change needed' to help drive and track progress towards these outcomes. The Strategy contains:
  - **Six** Ambitions
  - **22** Outcomes
  - **102** Indicators
  - **80** actions to drive change.
- A Baseline Report with **119 data points** will be used to measure progress over time.

Key Inputs to the Strategy

- Three phases of consultations
- Women's Economic Equality Taskforce Budget Advice and Final Report, including recommendations for Government.
- State and Territory Governments Gender Equality Strategies.
- Policy Analysis and Research from a group of academics with specific gender expertise in conjunction with KPMG, commissioned by PM&C's Office for Women.
- Consultations with National Women's Alliances.

Public engagement with the Strategy

Since the Strategy's launch up until 31 January 2025:

- **93,993** website visits. **40,891** of these were first time visits or new users (these are only counted once so the first time a person visits. Any revisits are not counted)
- **7,552** Strategy downloads (all file types)
- **192,890** people have interacted with the Strategy across Australian Government and PM&C social media.

Consultation

Three phases of consultation saw over 3,000 people share their views:

- 124 attendees contributed to 14 targeted roundtables
  - Universities; Community Sector; Unions; Businesses; and individual subject matter experts
- 2,735 individual online survey responses
- 174 submissions in response to the discussion paper
- Minister led roundtables in several locations including Perth and Melbourne
- Targeted consultation on elements of the draft Strategy with key stakeholders (detailed below)

Key feedback on the draft included the importance of women's safety throughout the Strategy, and an emphasis on the Strategy taking an intersectional approach.

Key Stakeholders in Strategy development

- Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) (member list to the right)
- Women's Economic Equality Taskforce
- Six National Women's Alliances
- Select AHRC Commissioners
- Federal, State and Territory Governments
- Selected academics and former WEET members

Working for Women Implementation Interdepartmental Committee

Meeting frequency: ToRs state meetings are expected to be held at the beginning and end of each budget cycle. Last meeting – 13 August 2024. Next meeting – March or April 2025

Members:

Membership from across 19 departments and agencies. All departments are represented along with the following agencies:

- Australian Public Service Commission
- Jobs and Skills Australia
- National Emergency Management Agency
- National Indigenous Australians Agency

Working for Women Strategy Group

Meeting frequency: held twice a year, usually in line with Budget cycles.
Last meeting – 14 October 2024. Next meeting – post Budget 2025-26

Members:

- Executive Director, Office for Women (Chair)
- Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission
- Ambassador for Gender Equality, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Chief Executive Officer, Workplace Gender Equality Agency
- Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission
- eSafety Commissioner, eSafety

Gender Data Steering Group

Meeting frequency: held twice a year, with additional meetings convened as necessary.

Members:

- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Co-Chair)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (Co-Chair)
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Australian Taxation Office
- Department of Education
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Department of Finance
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Industry, Science and Resources
- Department of Social Services
- Jobs and Skills Australia
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Office of the National Data Commissioner, Department of Finance
- Services Australia
- The Treasury
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Women's Economic Equality Taskforce (WEET): Key Deliverables

Subject/Issue

The WEET was established in September 2022 and provided independent advice to Government on a wide range of women's economic equality issues.

Handling Advice

- N/A

OFW Role

- OFW provided the WEET with secretariat, administrative and policy support.
    - This included organising briefing sessions with relevant Departments and external experts.

Key points

- The WEET's final report (released on 23 October 2023) and advice on the 2023-24 Budget (released on 18 April 2023) were their major deliverables to Government.
- In addition, the Taskforce engaged with a range of Government priorities to drive women's economic equality, including:
    - ***Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*** (Strategy).
        - The WEET's report and recommendations were a key input into the Strategy. In supporting the development of the Strategy, the WEET provided input on first phase consultation invitees, observed the first phase of consultations, and were briefed on work undertaken by academics on the architecture to support change.
    - The **Employment White Paper**.
        - Treasury provided an update on the White Paper and Women's Budget Statement in Taskforce meetings on 21 September 2022, 2 November 2022 and 23 January 2023. Treasury also provided a standalone briefing on 11 October 2022.

  - Advice on the **Paid Parental Leave (PPL) Scheme** to inform the *Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Improvements for Families and Gender Equality) Act 2023* (passed 6 March 2023).
  - Advice on the **design** of the expansion of the PPL scheme to inform the *Paid Parental Leave Amendment (More Support for Working Families) Act 2024* (passed 18 March 2024).
  - **Received policy briefings** from:
    - the Care and Support Economy Taskforce (in PM&C);
    - the Behavioural Economics Team of Australia (BETA in PM&C);
    - Department of Employment and Workplace Relations;
    - Department of Education; and
    - Department of Social Services.
- Members of the Taskforce also met with and provided input into:
  - **Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services** in relation to ParentsNext; and
  - **OECD delegation** for the Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting Review in Australia.
- The Chair attended the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation** Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy in the United States.
  - The Chair delivered a keynote address on Unpaid Care and Structural Reform, advocating for greater awareness of the economic cost of not valuing the care economy and drawing attention to the need to rebalance unpaid care.

WEET: Final Advice

- The Chair provided the WEET's final advice and recommendations to the Minister for Women on 1 September 2023.
  - A preview of the recommendations was provided on 23 August 2023.
  - The recommendations did not change between the preview and the final report.
  - The recommendations were provided shortly after the conclusion of the Chair's term.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WEET**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- The final report was published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) website on 23 October 2023.
- The final report and recommendations were considered during the development of the Strategy.
    - The Strategy's focus on economic equality builds on the recommendations of the WEET's final report.
    - The Taskforce's seven recommendations shaped the priority areas of the Strategy and the future areas for reform.
    - Given the long-term nature of some of the recommendations, the WEET report will continue to inform the decisions Government makes in future Budget cycles.
- The final report makes seven broad recommendations with 47 sub-recommendations that focus on short and long term effort.
- The recommendations cover themes such as care, work, education and skills, the tax and transfer system, and the role of Government.
- In the 2025-26 MYEFO context, announcements on the following helped support the implementation of the WEET:
    - supporting a 15 per cent wage increase for the early childhood education and care workforce (recommendation 2.3);
    - supporting the Fair Work Commission's decision to further increase the wages of aged care workers providing direct care from January 2025 (recommendation 2.8); and
    - replacing the Child Care Subsidy Activity Test with a new 3 Day Guarantee from January 2026 (recommendation 2.2).
- These supported announcements in the 2024-25 Budget context, including:
    - the payment of superannuation on Government-funded paid parental leave (recommendation 2.6);
    - establishment of the Working for Women Program (recommendation 7.4);
    - strengthening targets for women's representation on Australian Government Boards and advisory bodies (recommendation 5.2);
    - establishing a new voluntary Panel Supplier Portal, a public, searchable supplier register to identify women-owned and led businesses (recommendation 5.1);

  - regular reporting through Departmental Annual Reports and applying gender analysis to the development of government strategies (recommendation 1);
  - financial support to students during mandatory placements while studying nursing, midwifery, teaching and social work (recommendation 4.5);
  - establishing the Building Women's Careers program to create structural and systematic change in the work and training environments of key male-dominated industries (recommendation 4.1); and
  - care and support economy reform (recommendation 2.5).

- This built on work already undertaken such as:
  - finalising work to establish a targets scheme within the Workplace Gender Equality reporting framework to be considered when assessing eligibility for government procurement – requiring businesses with 500 or more employees to commit to and achieve against targets to improve gender equality in their workplaces (recommendation 5.4);
  - modernising the Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave Scheme (recommendation 2.7);
  - abolishing and replacing ParentsNext (recommendation 4.2);
  - continuing workplace relations reforms (recommendation 3); and
  - the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care (recommendation 2.1).

OFW Role

- As an independent Taskforce, the WEET drafted their own final recommendations.
- OFW supported the Taskforce by fact-checking and providing publicly available evidence and data.

Development of the final recommendations

- The WEET considered a number of inputs when drafting the final recommendations, including the available evidence, views from members and their own consultation processes, including with OFW.
- OFW did not clear or sign off on the WEET's final recommendations.

Economic analysis in the WEET's final report

- The WEET used publicly available data and evidence to inform their work, including their final report.
- The WEET's final report noted that '$128 billion is the value to the Australian economy that can be realised by purposefully removing the persistent and pervasive barriers to women's full and equal participation in economic activity'.
    - Deloitte Access Economics report *Breaking the Norm* found that if Australia abandoned prescriptive gender norms, the economic impact could be a boost to GDP of at least $128 billion annually for the next fifty years.[1]

WEET: Advice on Paid Parental Leave

- The Government asked the WEET to provide advice on the optimal Paid Parental Leave (PPL) Scheme, including on:
    - how additional weeks should be accessed to maximise women's economic equality and increase uptake by men;
    - how much leave can be taken concurrently with another parent; and
    - the amount of reserved leave available to each parent.

Stage One advice - reforms to commence from 1 July 2023

- On 16 November 2022, the WEET Chair provided its first stage interim advice to Ministers Gallagher and Rishworth via letter.
    - The Ministers asked for the WEET's initial advice to inform the first tranche of amendments to the *Paid Parental Leave Act 2010*.
    - The Ministers asked for advice on the final design of the scheme in terms of how the extra weeks of leave should be accessed to maximise women's economic equality.
- The WEET foreshadowed that it would provide advice in Stage Two on the other PPL settings to maximise gender equitable outcomes and greater sharing of care between women and men in Australia.
- The WEET's **Stage One advice informed the *Paid Parental Leave* Amendment *(Improvements for Families and Gender Equality) Act 2023*,** which passed through both houses on 6 March 2023, to effect the reforms that commenced from 1 July 2023.

[1] Deloitte Access Economics, Breaking the Norm, (November 2022), Sydney, page 23.

- This sees two weeks of reserved leave and retains two weeks concurrent leave.
- The WEET advised their final advice on recommended settings may differ from their initial advice. The Government sought to avoid legislating changes that may have been inconsistent with this advice.
- The initial advice was not published as it was deliberative in nature and the WEET noted it was subject to change as they continued their research and considerations.
- Release of the advice is a decision for the Minister for Women and Minister for Social Services.

Stage Two advice – reforms to commence from 1 July 2024

- On 9 June 2023, the WEET provided its second, final stage of advice to Minister Gallagher via letter.
    - The WEET provided advice on the final design of the 26 weeks, recommending four weeks reserved leave for each parent, and four weeks concurrent leave.
    - The WEET also recommended the Government evaluate the benefits and impacts of extending the PPL scheme to 52 weeks.
- The WEET's Stage Two advice was published on the PM&C website on 19 October 2023.
- The WEET's **Stage Two advice informed the *Paid Parental Leave* Amendment *(More Support for Working Families) Act 2024*,** which passed through both houses on 18 March 2024, to put into effect the PPL expansion that commenced from 1 July 2024.
- The Act supports the final settings of the Paid Parental Leave scheme by increasing the reserved period and concurrency limit to four weeks each, as recommended by the WEET.
    - This sees the scheme expanding by two additional weeks a year until the scheme reaches its full 26 weeks from 1 July 2026.
    - On 1 July 2024, the maximum entitlement for a partnered parent increased from 18 to 20 weeks, maintaining the reserved period and the concurrency limit at two weeks each.
    - On 1 July 2025, the maximum entitlement for a partnered parent will increase from 20 to 21 weeks, the reserved period will increase to three weeks, and the concurrency limit will increase to four weeks.

- On 1 July 2026, the maximum entitlement for a partnered parent will increase from 21 to 22 weeks, the reserved period will increase to four weeks, and the concurrency limit will be maintained at four weeks.

Supporting Research

- The WEET commissioned research from Professor Marian Baird AO and Associate Professor Elizabeth Hill to inform the stage one and stage two advice.
- Both stages of research were published on the PM&C website on 19 October 2023.

Stage One – Next Steps for Paid Parental Leave in Australia

- The professors provided the WEET with a report outlining evidence on PPL in Australia and overseas, exploring patterns of uptake by mothers and fathers/same sex partners.
- The report considered international best practice and potential effective approaches in the Australian context around both the balance of reserved and concurrent leave.
- The research proposed three models for consideration in 2023:

	Parent A	**Parent B**	**Shared**	**Concurrent**
Model 1: Equal Sharing and Flexible Care	2 weeks	2 weeks	16 weeks	10 weeks
Model 2: Incentivise Father/Partner Care	2 weeks	2 weeks	16 weeks	2 weeks
Model 3: Protection for Maternal and Child Health	4 weeks	2 weeks	14 weeks	4 weeks

Stage Two – Paid Parental Leave for Future Families: the Voices of Australian Parents

- The research focused on interviewing diverse family types on their experience with PPL and the ideal use of PPL to promote gender equality, women's workforce participation, and maternal wellbeing and child health.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WEET**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- The final research report was provided to the WEET Chair on 28 April 2023.
- The research report proposed the below design as per an accelerated timetable and extended scheme:

Year of intro	Total PPL*	Parent A	Parent B	Shared unreserved	Sole father leave	Total concurrent leave
2023	20	2 weeks	2 weeks	16 weeks	0 weeks	2 weeks
2024	26	4 weeks	4 weeks	18 weeks	0 weeks	4 weeks
2026	52	12 weeks	12 weeks	28 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks

* All PPL paid at minimum wage; ** PPL to be taken within the first two years of a child's life

OFW Role

- OFW provides policy advice on the gendered considerations of PPL and their implications for women's workforce participation.
- OFW facilitated consultation between the WEET and stakeholders and academics, to support the WEET to provide advice on the optimal policy settings for PPL.
- When the initial PPL measure was brought forward in the 2022-23 October Budget, and final settings for the expansion of the scheme in MYEFO 2023-24, OFW provided advice to Government.
- OFW notes the importance of incentivising a more equitable distribution of unpaid care. OFW also advised on maternal health considerations and the importance of retaining flexibility for parents.

Superannuation on PPL

- In its 2023-24 Budget advice letter and final report, the WEET recommended the payment of superannuation on all forms of PPL.
    - On 1 October 2024 the *Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Adding Superannuation for a More Secure Retirement) Act 2024* received Royal Assent. Meaning from 1 July 2025, the Government will pay superannuation on Government-funded PPL.

Refer to Paid Parental Leave Brief.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WEET**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

WEET: Taskforce engagements with women across Australia

- To inform their advice and recommendations, the WEET held nine engagement sessions to understand women's experiences with Australia's economic system to inform its final report and recommendations.
- Through these sessions the WEET heard from women with lived experience in rural, remote and regional areas, women in insecure work, women in trades, women working in social enterprise, women working in health, women from multicultural backgrounds, and economists.
    - OFW's records show 62 people participated in these sessions, however WEET members engaged with a wide range of women outside of this during their terms.
- Some reflections from these engagements are outlined in the WEET's Budget priorities letter including:
    - feeling frustrated, disrespected and unsafe and that economic security is out of their reach;
    - wanting better lives and rights and to feel included and valued as contributors to society; and
    - having a belief that their economic security will come from not relying on anyone else, being free from violence, and being able to participate in and have access to decent, well paid and secure work.

Logistics

- Sessions were organised and facilitated by the WEET.
    - OFW organised and provided remuneration to lived experience participants and participating members.
- Women sharing their lived experiences were remunerated for their time with gift cards valued up to $150.
    - This is in line with similar consultations which have been undertaken by BETA within PM&C.
- As of 31 March 2024, the final amount of **45 gift cards** with a total value of **$5,365** have been distributed to participants.
    - The purchase and distribution of gift cards has been recorded and approved under section 23(3) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

WEET: Costs and contracts

- The WEET reported directly to the Minister for Women, and had access to a modest budget to fund research and analytical work.
    - OFW provided secretariat support to the WEET (managing appointments, taking meeting minutes, processing payments, publishing outcomes, engaging with the Special Adviser to schedule meetings, providing advice to Government on the Taskforce's operations and advice).

WEET executive support

- Meredith Turnbull was engaged as the Special Adviser to the Taskforce Chair in December 2022 to provide high-level executive support to the WEET Chair.
    - The Special Adviser was engaged to enable the WEET to streamline its work, deliver on its outputs and was accountable for the administrative functions of the WEET.
    - The Special Adviser worked closely with, but remained independent from OFW.
- Meredith Turnbull was selected by the WEET Chair in consultation with OFW, based on her experience in holding executive positions in a limited tender process.
    - Fees were negotiated with the supplier based on their expertise and engagement in similar roles, and the high level of support required to meet the needs of the WEET and the Chair.
- Meredith Turnbull was approached directly for their experience and ability to provide high level executive support, including 17 years' experience in the community, health and social sectors, along with holding executive positions on the boards of numerous small and larger social sector organisations.
- Meredith Turnbull fulfils the definition under the *Commonwealth Procurement Rules* for the Small Medium Enterprise exemption to enable engagement above the $80,000 (GST inclusive) limited tender threshold.
- Meredith Turnbull was engaged under three contracts with OFW.
    - The first contract ($105,681.82 GST exclusive) supported early WEET conversations, policy development, and the engagement sessions with women across Australia.

  - The second contract ($49,545.45, GST exclusive) facilitated delivery of final WEET deliverables, including the second tranche of PPL advice.
  - The third contract ($27,500, GST exclusive) facilitated delivery of the final WEET report.
    - The third contract acknowledged the criticality of the continuation of the Special Adviser to the Taskforce Chair meeting her requirements to deliver the final report.
    - To not continue with the Special Adviser would have delayed delivery of the final report, which was critical to the continued development of the National Strategy.
  - Ms Turnbull's three contracts were aligned with the WEET's phases of work and consistent with the appointment of the Taskforce Chair made by the Minister for Women.

- The Special Adviser:
  - Organised all, and facilitated most, of WEET engagement sessions with women with lived experience and experts.
  - Worked closely with members to prepare for WEET meetings.
  - Collaborated closely with the Chair and members to draft the Budget priorities advice letter to the Minister.
  - Collaborated closely with the Chair and former members in the drafting of the stage two paid parental leave advice.
  - Collaborated closely with the Chair and former members in the drafting of the final recommendations and report.

PPL contract details

- Professors Baird and Hill were engaged by OFW through a limited tender process based on their unique expertise in gender, employment and care in Australia.
- As at 31 March 2024, the final contract value is $70,000 (GST exclusive).
- The researchers were engaged through two individual contracts, each valued at $35,000 (GST exclusive).
  - The first phase report Next Steps for Paid Parental Leave in Australia was received on 18 November 2023.
  - The second phase report *Paid Parental Leave for Future Families: The Voices of Australian Parents* was received on 28 April 2023.

Final Report Design contract

- OFW engaged Mahlab Media Pty Ltd to copy write and design the final Taskforce deliverables.
- Mahlab Media was selected through a limited tender process due to their track record producing materials consistent with the Taskforce's final report that communicate complex gender-based and systems-change policy work in an accessible and empowering manner for multiple audiences, all within short time frames.
    - Mahlab Media was chosen by OFW with consultation with the WEET Chair, following internal procurement processes.
    - Mahlab are a Small to Medium Enterprise.
- As at 31 December 2023, the final contract value is $72,020 (GST exclusive).
- Fees were negotiated based on the high level of writing and design needed to support the Taskforce's vision within the required timeframes to provide recommendations to Government.

Former member support

- Following the end of member's appointments on 30 April 2023 and at the request of the WEET Chair, PM&C offered to engage five former members under additional simple contracts.
    - The five members were selected by the WEET Chair, not OFW.
    - Contract arrangements provided for an hourly rate of $200 with a total allowance of eight hours (up to $1600).
- The purpose of these agreements was to ensure former members were offered remuneration for their work to support the finalisation of the WEET advice to Government.
- The agreements ended on 30 June 2023.
- As at 31 March 2024, the final amount of $3,309 has been expended under these contracts.

WEET: Appointments

Appointment period

- The Chair was appointed by the Minister for Women on **30 August 2022 until 30 March 2023**, an initial period of seven months.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WEET**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- Members were appointed on **13 September 2022 until 13 March 2023**, an initial period of six months.
- On **25 February 2023**, the Minister invited the Chair to extend her term **to 31 May 2023 (ten weeks)** and members to extend their terms to **30 April 2023 (six weeks)** to allow the WEET sufficient time to finalise its work.
    - All members except Ms Campbell accepted the extension. Her term ended on 13 March 2023.
    - Ms Picone resigned from the WEET in February 2023 due to pre-arranged personal leave.
- On **25 May 2023**, the Minister for Women extended the Chair's appointment for a second time from **31 May 2023 until 31 July 2023 (eight weeks).**
- On **12 August 2023**, the Minister for Women reappointed the Chair until **21 August 2023 (nine days)** to support final delivery of the Taskforce's recommendations.
- The appointment extensions made by the Minister for Women were made in accordance with the appointments process outlined in the Cabinet Handbook.
    - The Minister for Women wrote to the Prime Minister on each occasion to notify him of the appointment extensions.
- The WEET was time limited in nature.
    - The Strategy outlines the role of the National Women's Alliances as a key mechanism for the Government to hear from experts and women in all their diversity to inform policy.
    - This will be complemented by a regular engagement mechanism for Government to hear directly from women about their lives, concerns and priorities.

Selection Process

- Members were selected based on their wide-ranging, diverse lived experience and background including First Nations women, women with disability, young women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, with representation from academia, business and civil advocacy.

- OFW provided a list of 52 candidates to the Minister for Women's Office for consideration with a summary assessment of the candidates' skills, qualifications and attributes.
- Four members of the WEET were recommended by the Minister rather than the OFW.
- The Chair's appointment was agreed by the Prime Minister. The members' appointments were agreed by the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister on behalf of the Prime Minister.

Taskforce membership

- Sam Mostyn AO (Chair) – Chair of ANROWS; incoming Governor-General of Australia
- Adrienne Picone – Chief Executive Officer of Tasmania's Council of Social Service
- Chiou See Anderson – President at National Council of Women of Australia; board member of the International Council of Women
- Danielle Wood – then Chief Executive Officer of Grattan Institute; President of the Economic Society of Australia; co-founder and first Chair of the Women in Economics Network and Productivity Commissioner
- Jennifer Westacott AO – Chancellor of Western Sydney University
- Jenny Macklin – Vice-Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Melbourne, School of Government
- Michele O'Neil – President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Rae Cooper AO – Director of the Gender Equality in Working Life Research Initiative, University of Sydney; President Elect of International Labor and Employment Relations Association (ILERA)
- Samantha Connor – Vice President of People with Disability Australia
- Shelley Cable – Nyoongar, Director and Advocate for Indigenous Economic Empowerment
- Shirleen Campbell – Co-ordinator of the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group; NT Local Hero in 2020
- Sizol Fuyana – Founder of Fuyana Support; 2022 Northern Territory Young Australian of the Year
- Terese Edwards – Executive Director of the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WEET**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

WEET: 2023-24 Budget advice

- On 24 March 2023, the WEET provided advice on their key priorities for the 2023-24 Budget to Government.
- On 18 April 2023, this advice was published on the PM&C website.
- Through the 2023-24 Budget, Government announced a range of measures to support implementation of the WEET's Budget priorities. The Government has built upon these measures in the 2024-25 Budget.

Reinstate the Parenting Payment (Single) for women with children over eight years old

- Through the **2023-24 Budget**, the Government is investing **$1.9 billion over five years from 2023-24** to expand the eligibility for Parenting Payment (Single) to single parents with a youngest dependent child aged under 14 years of age (increased from under eight).

OFW Role

- OFW provided advice as it was considered in the Budget context.

Refer further questions to the Department of Social Services.

Abolish the ParentsNext program

- The Government abolished the ParentsNext program from 31 October 2024 and replaced it with Parent Pathways, a new voluntary pre-employment service (replacement service) on 1 November 2024, designed in consultation with parents.
- Abolishing ParentsNext and replacing it with a new program was consistent with strong calls from parents, advocates and experts including the:
    - Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee;
    - interim report of the House Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services; and
    - final report of the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care.

Refer to Parent Pathways brief.

Increase the rate of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)

- Through the 2024-25 Budget, the Government is investing $1.9 billion over 5 years from 2023-24 (and $0.5 billion per year ongoing from 2028-29) to increase maximum rates of CRA by an additional 10 per cent from 20 September 2024.

- This builds on the 2023-24 Budget investment of $2.7 billion over five years from 2023-24 (and $0.7 billion per year ongoing) to increase the maximum payment rate by 15 per cent.

OFW Role

- OFW provided advice on the proposals' potential impact on women as it was considered in the Budget context.

Refer further questions to the Department of Social Services.

Invest in an interim pay-rise for all early childhood educators and aged care workers

- Through the **2024-25 Budget**, Government committed to provide funding towards a wage increase for the early childhood education and care workforce. On 8 August 2024, the Government announced funding for a 15 per cent wage increase, phased in over two years from December 2024.
- Through the **2024-25 Budget**, Government committed to funding a further increase to the award wages of many aged care workers.
- Through the **2023-24 Budget**, the Government has committed **$11.3 billion over five years from 2022-23** to fund a 15 per cent increase to minimum wages for many aged care workers from 1 July 2023, including registered nurses, enrolled nurses, assistants in nursing, personal care workers, home care workers, recreational activity officers, and head chefs and cooks.
- Through the **2023-24 Budget**, the Government is also investing **$72.4 million over five years from 2022-23** to provide professional development opportunities for ECEC workers to improve retention in the sector.

OFW Role

- OFW provided advice as it was considered in the Budget context.

Refer further questions on ECEC workforce to Department of Education and further questions on the aged care workforce to the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Raise the base rate of income support (Jobseeker and working age payments)

- Through the **2024-25 Budget**, the Government is investing $41.2 million over five years from 2023-24 (and $7 million per year ongoing from 2028-29) to extend eligibility for the existing higher rate of JobSeeker

Payment to single recipients with a partial capacity to work of zero to 14 hours per week from 20 September 2024.

- Through the **2023-24 Budget**, the Government is providing **$4.9 billion over five years from 2022-23** and **$1.3 billion per year** ongoing to **increase support** for around 1.1 million people receiving working age payments.
- The Government also extended the eligibility for the existing higher rate of JobSeeker Payment for single Australians aged 55 and over, who are on the payment for nine or more continuous months (previously aged over 60).

OFW Role

- OFW provided advice as it was considered in the Budget context.

Refer further questions to the Department of Social Services.

Pay superannuation on Paid Parental Leave

Through the **2024-25 Budget**, the Government is investing $1.1 billion over four years from 2024-25 (and $0.6 million per year ongoing from 2028-29) to pay superannuation on Government-funded Paid Parental Leave for births and adoptions on or after 1 July 2025.

Refer to Paid Parental Leave brief

Abolish the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Activity Test

In December 2024, the Government announced it would be replacing the Child Care Subsidy activity test with a 3 Day Guarantee to begin in January 2026. The *Early Childhood Education and Care (Three Day Guarantee) Bill* passed Parliament on 13 February 2025.

Refer to ECEC Reforms brief

Date:	18 Feb 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy
Branch/Section:	Strategy, Norms and Evidence
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Nil

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WFW Grant Program**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Working for Women Grant Program

Subject/Issue

Investment through the Working for Women Program (WfWP) will support action under *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (Strategy).

Handling Advice

- N/A

OFW Role

- OFW administers the WfWP.

Key points

- To support the implementation of the Strategy, the women's portfolio grant funding, previously known as the Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP) has been reframed to the WfWP.
- The WfWP aims to improve outcomes for women and gender equality in Australia, with a focus on addressing gendered attitudes and stereotypes and taking action across the five priority areas of the Strategy.
- As at 31 January 2025, 44 grant agreements are active. By 30 June 2025, 21 grant agreements will remain active, with the residual grants ending progressively by June 2030.
- Funding priorities supporting the Strategy's implementation in 2024-25 include:
    - Increased investment of $10.88 million over five years, from December 2024 to June 2029, in the National Women's Alliances (NWA) to ensure women's voices and expertise inform the implementation of the Strategy. *See National Women's Alliances Grant Round BPB*.
    - Investing $5 million over six years from 2024-25, to establish a research partnership to help build the evidence base on what works to achieve gender equality, with a particular focus on economic equality. *See Research Partnership Grant Round BPB*.
- From 2025-26, the WfWP will also support further evidence-based projects to drive action across the Strategy's priority areas.
- These projects will be informed by, and build on, the advisory and research partnerships, as well as further stakeholder engagement and existing evidence.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WFW Grant Program**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Research Partnership to build the evidence base on what works to achieve gender equality

- On 25 February 2025, the Government announced they would form a research partnership with a consortium led by the University of Sydney.
- The partnership will bring together world-leading research capability, with the University of Sydney's Australian Centre for Gender Equality and Inclusion @ Work collaborating with the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research (University of Technology Sydney) and the University of Melbourne.
- The research partnership will provide a mechanism for the Government to hear directly from the Australian community, particularly women, about their experiences, concerns and priorities.
- Key activities and outputs include:
    - Developing an agile and iterative **research agenda**, to ensure the grant activities respond to Government priorities
    - Undertaking **Pulse Checks** for the Government to hear directly from the Australian community, particularly women
    - Providing **Actionable insights reports** to identify avenues for action, by Government and relevant stakeholders to drive women's economic equality.
- The partnership will be a collaborative effort between the researchers and OFW. OFW will ensure that University of Sydney is connected with key Australian Government policy owners and data holders, including the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
    - The research partnerships key activities will be developed in close collaboration with OFW, ensuring close alignment to Government priorities.
- The Strategy acknowledges a robust evidence base is required to identify the most effective ways to achieve gender equality.
- While there has been significant effort to identify the data on the case for change, less is known about what action is required to create and maintain change in order to improve women's lives in a tangible way, and to achieve gender equality for all.
- The research opportunity has a particular focus on economic equality, noting the existing evidence base for gender-based violence and health.
- For this grant opportunity, up to $5 million (GST exclusive) is committed over six years from 2024–25 to 2029–30.
-

2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	Total
$383,401	$1,110,185	$949,976	$931,120	$949,137	$633,197	**$ 4,957,016**

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WFW Grant Program**

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

**Indexation will be applied annually on top of these amounts, in line with the relevant wage cost index.*

National Women's Alliances (NWA)

- Following the release of the Strategy, and aligned with the conclusion of the existing NWA grant agreements, the Alliance program was redesigned to more closely align with the priorities of the Strategy and support greater collaboration and coordination across alliances.
- The new Alliance program will continue to focus on six themes supported under the previous model:
    - Gender based violence
    - Women's economic equality and leadership
    - First Nations women
    - Women with disability
    - Migrant and refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse women
    - Women living in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia.
- An open competitive grant opportunity to select NWAs was undertaken and completed in late 2024, which included the option for a single alliance to represent more than one theme.
- Five alliances are funded to represent the six themes from 2 December 2024 – 30 June 2029
    - Working with Women Alliance – led by YWCA Canberra, representing both gender based violence and women's economic equality and leadership
    - National Rural Women's Coalition
    - Women with Disabilities Australia
    - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
    - The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia – leading a new migrant and refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse women's Alliance.
- This network of Alliances will provide evidence based, intersectional gender equality advice and civil society expertise to Government on areas of most impact and influence to the Strategy.
- Examples of Alliance outputs include:
    - One cross Alliance pre-Budget submission per year to Government, capturing advice and solutions to improve outcomes for women in all their diversity, consistent with the outcomes of the Strategy
    - Present solutions and priorities for the issues affecting women in Australia through submissions, position papers and reports and participating in government consultation processes.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WFW Grant Program**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- One of the key changes in the new model is bringing together the two policy themes, gender-based violence and women's economic equality and leadership, under the Working with Women Alliance.
    - The Working with Women Alliance will work collaboratively with the other Alliances, who have strong connections to their communities and priorities, to ensure advice to government is truly intersectional and representative of all women in Australia
    - This change brings a strong alignment with the Strategy, reflecting the intrinsic intersection between women's safety and economic equality.
- Under the new arrangements, funding has been increased by 25 per cent. In addition to the base funding of $10.88 million over five years, indexation will be applied annually, consistent with previous funding arrangements.
- Five-year grant arrangements will provide stability and long term funding to ensure Government's ongoing support of women's voices as central to policy making.
    - The increase in resources, closer collaboration and coordination, and direction through the Strategy to focus effort, are all part of the scaffolding to ensure the Alliances have real impact and are working in partnership with government.

Funding per theme

Financial Year	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
Base Funding[1]	$230,869[2]	$395,775	$395,775	$395,775	$395,775	$1,813,969

**Indexation will be applied annually on top of these amounts, in line with the relevant wage cost index.*

Women in Public Office (WIPO) Grant

- $5 million (2022-23 to 2026-27) will be provided to Women for Election Australia (WFE) to build and support a pipeline of diverse women to prepare for, and enter, public office via:
    - **place-based training events** across Australia, following the election cycle of local, state and federal tiers of government
    - **online training forums** and mentoring
    - a **tech-based training platform**, Campaign in Your Pocket app, containing candidate resources and support forums.

[1] Note YWCA Canberra will be funded for two themes: gender-based violence and women's economic equality and leadership.
[2] Pro-rata funding increase of 25 per cent from 2024-25 full year funding projection of previous agreement from 1 Dec 2024 to 30 June 2025.

- WFE lead a group of partners to deliver this non-partisan program, including Turnstone Collective, Australian Local Government Women's Association, Global Institute of Women's Leadership, Ruth McGowan Pty Ltd, and Quantum Impact Group Pty Ltd.
    - In 2024, WFE changed arrangements for the delivery of training and content to First Nations and culturally and racially marginalised candidates from Politics in Colour (PiC) to Turnstone Collective.
- The project commenced in June 2023 and WFE were selected through a competitive selection process.

Grants under the former Women's Leadership and Development Program

- More than 76,000 women and girls across Australia are estimated to benefit from 89 projects delivered under the former WLDP (2019-20 to 2026--27).
- Projects have contributed to improving the overall economic security, workforce participation, leadership representation and safety outcomes of women in Australia.
- The majority of projects focus on boosting women's employment opportunities, particularly in traditionally male-dominated sectors, and benefit women from all backgrounds, including women with disability, First Nations women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, and women living in rural, regional and remote areas.
- To date, evaluation of the WLDP has been limited to individual project streams and independent project evaluations. A program wide evaluation approach is being considered to measure WLDP outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of the program in achieving the Government's gender equality priorities.

WfWP Funding

- The appropriation for the WFWP is approximately **$49.935**[3] million over 2024-25 to 2027-28.
- **$32.760 million** (66 per cent) is contractually committed to current projects and **$17.175 million** (34 per cent) uncommitted over 2024-25 to 2027-28.
- Through the 2024-25 Budget the following changes were made to the existing program appropriation:

[3] Figures are based on the re-profiled appropriation and reclassification of administered funds to departmental funds for Hub administration costs, published as per the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2024-25.

- **$8.329 million** was re-profiled across the first five years of the Strategy (2023-24 to 2027-28) to enable the establishment of two key partnerships (NWA and the Research Partnership), and to fund future projects to drive action under the Strategy.
- **$0.672 million** (2023-24 to 2029-30) was reclassified from administered to departmental funding to meet implementation costs for the two key partnerships, including costs for the DSS Community Grants Hub (Hub).
- **$0.092 million** (2026-27 to 2027-28) was indexed in the 2024-25 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.

- The presentation of the appropriation in the 2024-25 PM&C Portfolio Budget Statement shows a **$0.799 million reduction** to the appropriation in comparison to figures published in the 2023-24 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements. This reduction is due to reclassification from administered to departmental and indexation adjustments. Further indexation **increases of $0.092 million** were made in the latest 2024-25 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.

Working for Women Program Appropriation ($'m)	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
2023-24 PAES	21.368	21.144	18.000	5.256	5.382[1]	**71.150**
Reclassificatio and Movement of Funds	-0.860	-7.046	-0.937	4.334	3.896	**-0.613**[2]
s 47E(d)						
2024-25 PBS[3]	20.508	14.058	16.958	9.575	9.252	**70.351**
s 47E(d)						
2024-25 PAES[4]	20.508	14.058	16.958	9.631	9.288	**70.443**

[1] 2027-28 budget figure was not published at 2023-24 PAES.
[2] Additional reductions of $0.059 million are expected (in 2028-29 and 2029-30) as part of the re-profiling process and will result in an overall reduction to the appropriation of $0.672 million from 2023-24 to 2029-30.
[3] Figures are based on the re-profiling of the appropriation and reclassification of administered to departmental funds for Hub administration costs, published as per the Portfolio Budget Statements 2024-25.
[4]Additional indexation adjustments, published as per the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2024-25.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **WFW Grant Program**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Background

Former National Women's Alliances

- Funding agreements with the former NWA ended 30 November 2024.
- Each Alliance received $997,477 over 2021-22 to 2024-25, which included indexation.
- In addition to the above, $100,000 was provided to NRWC in 2023-24 to lead the development and submission of an independent Shadow Report under CEDAW, informed by comprehensive consultations with all NWA's and other Australian civil society organisations.

Former NWA funding per Alliance

Financial Year per Alliance	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Base Funding	$246,899[2]	$287,000	$292,740[3]	$127,464[4]	**$954,103**
s 47E(d)					
One-off Funding	-	$20,000		-	**$20,000**
Total	**$246,899**	**$312,740**	**$305,913**	**$131,925**	**$997,477**

Date: XX March 2025
Cleared by (SES): Megan Leahy , First Assistant Secretary
Branch/Section: Gender Equality Strategy and Reform / Working for Women Grants
Contact Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation: Nil

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF NWA Grant Round
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

National Women's Alliances Grant Round

Subject/Issue

On 29 October 2024, the Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Women announced five successful organisations to be funded as the new National Women's Alliances (NWA) from 2 December 2024.

Handling Advice

- N/A

OFW Role

- OFW administered the NWA grant round.

Key points

- To support implementation of the *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (Strategy), $10.88 million over five years is provided for the new NWA, through the Working for Women Program (WfWP).
- The WfWP aims to improve outcomes for women and gender equality in Australia, with a focus on addressing gendered attitudes and stereotypes and taking action across the five priority areas of the Strategy.

Grant Round Outcomes (as per GoGs)

- The intended outcomes are to engage National Women's Alliance (NWA) that:
    - **Provide gender expertise and solutions**, bringing the views of the women's sector and gender experts together into strategic, intersectional and evidence-based advice to Government to drive progress of the Strategy's outcomes.
    - **Present solutions and priorities for the issues affecting women in Australia**, particularly those from groups that are traditionally marginalised, informed by engagement with a diversity of women in the community and organisations that represent and deliver services to them.

Key Dates and Statistics

- 7 March 2024 - A forecast opportunity was published on GrantConnect and existing Alliances and key stakeholders emailed (10 weeks prior to round opening).
- 21 May to 3 July - Grant round open for applications (6 weeks).

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF NWA Grant Round
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- 30 May 2024 - An information briefing was held for all potential applicants. Advertised on PM&C website, through emails to stakeholders and social media (LinkedIn and X).
- 29 October 2024 - outcomes announced.

s 47E(d)

Consortia Applications

- s 47E(d)
- Consortia applications were encouraged through this grant opportunity, noting the opportunity for cross collaboration and collegial partnerships.
- Through this grant opportunity, consortia applications were required to represent more than one theme and have diversity of expertise across those themes.
- Consortia applications were encouraged to provide:
    - cross collaboration and collegial partnerships

  - the ability to maximize economies of scale, improve geographical coverage and take advantage of diverse expertise
  - the potential to address capacity limitations of smaller organisations
  - the opportunity to use collective resources and deliver more cohesive and effective activities.
- Given the streamlined approached to the NWA delivery model, consortia applications seeking to represent only one theme were ineligible, noting that this would not deliver efficiencies or represent value for money.

Selection Process

- An open competitive grant process was conducted.
- Applications were assessed against three weighted criteria as outlined in the GOGs (C1: 35%, C2: 35%, C3: 30%).
- Following compliance and eligibility checks, the Hub conducted the preliminary assessment of all eligible applications, which were provided to the department for consideration by the Selection Advisory Panel (SAP).
- The SAP, established by the department, and supported by an independent probity advisor comprised of officials with relevant subject matter expertise and external sector experts:

Clancie Hall (Chair)	Assistant Secretary, Gender Equality Systems and Partnerships Branch OFW, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
s 47F	s 47F The Global Institute for Women's Leadership, The Australian National University
s 47F	s 47F Minderoo Foundation
Adviser	Closing the Gap and Culture, First Nations Policy Branch Social Policy, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Adviser	Working for Women Grants, Gender Equality Systems and Partnerships Branch OFW, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

- Subject Matter Experts were engaged from agencies with relevant expertise to review applications in line with the selection strategy, providing preliminary assessments and commentary for the SAP to consider. Subject matter expertise were provided from the following agencies:

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF NWA Grant Round

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Department of Social Services	Systemic Disability Advocacy and Reforms
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government	Regional Policy
National Indigenous Australians Agency	Families and Safety Branch
Department of Home Affairs	Immigration Group (multiple SMEs across divisions)
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Women's Economic Policy, OFW
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Gender-based Violence and Social Policy, OFW

- The SAP considered each eligible application against the weighted selection criteria, including how applications compared to each other and the proportionate mix across themes, cohorts and priority areas. s 47E(d)

s 47E(d)

Date: XX Feb 2025
Cleared by (SES): Megan Leahy, First Assistant Secretary
Branch/Section: Gender Equality Systems and Partnerships / Working for Women Grants
Contact Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation: Nil

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Research Partnership**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Research Partnership Grant Round

Subject/Issue

Research Partnership to build the evidence base on what works to achieve gender equality

Handling Advice

- N/A

OFW Role

- OFW administered the competitive grant round for the Research Partnership.

Key points

- To support implementation of the *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (Strategy), up to $5.0 million over six years is available for a Research Partnership, through the Working for Women Program (WfWP).
- The WfWP aims to improve outcomes for women and gender equality in Australia, with a focus on addressing gendered attitudes and stereotypes and taking action across the five priority areas of the Strategy.

Grant Round Outcomes (as per GoGs)

- The intended outcome is to undertake a collaborative partnership with a research institution that will:
    - Build the evidence base on what works to achieve gender equality, especially in relation to driving economic equality.
    - Provide the evidence to drive change, and target effort under Working for Women to where it has the most relevance for women and/or the highest impact. This includes providing data and actionable insights to support high quality gender analysis as part of gender responsive budgeting.

Key Dates and Statistics

- **10 May 2024**: A forecast opportunity was published on GrantConnect, 13 weeks before the round opened
- **13 August to 23 September 2024**: Grant round open for applications (6 weeks).
- **20 August 2024**: An information briefing was held for all potential applicants. Advertised on PM&C website and social media (LinkedIn and X) and GrantConnect.
- **25 February 2025** - outcomes announced.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Research Partnership**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

s 47E(d)

Selection Process

- An open competitive grant process (restricted by eligibility) was conducted.
- Applications were assessed against three weighted criteria as outlined in the GOGs (C1: 50%, C2: 30%, C3: 20%).
- Following compliance and eligibility checks undertaken by the Hub, OFW conducted the preliminary assessment of all eligible applications, which were provided for consideration by the Selection Advisory Panel (SAP).
- The SAP, established by OFW and supported by an independent probity advisor, comprised of officials with relevant subject matter expertise and external sector experts:

Clancie Hall (Chair)	Assistant Secretary, Gender Equality Systems and Partnerships Branch Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Adviser	Gender Equality Systems and Partnerships Branch Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 47F

Assistant Director	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Assistant Director	National Indigenous Australians Agency
Research Manager	Workplace Gender Equality Agency Australia

- The following Subject Matter Experts were engaged from agencies with relevant expertise to review applications, providing preliminary assessments and commentary for the SAP to consider:

Department of Social Services	Child and Parenting Wellbeing
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Women's Economic Policy, OFW
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Gender-based Violence and Social Policy, OFW

- The SAP considered each eligible application against the weighted selection criteria, including how applications compared to each other.
- Deliberations also considered whether applicants demonstrated a strong understanding and commitment to the intended outcomes of the grant opportunity, including the requirement for collaboration with government, whether national reach was evident and whether applications represented value with relevant money.
- Of the s 47E(d)

S 47E(d)

Conflicts of Interest

- Prior to accessing information in relation to grant applications, OFW provided Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) members, Subject Matter Experts and departmental staff involved in the grants administration and/or select phase of the grant opportunity, with conflict of interest and declaration of confidentiality forms to complete.
- OFW engaged an independent probity advisor who provided advice to OFW and SAP members throughout the duration of the assessment and selection process and attended the SAP meeting to ensure deliberations were in line with the guidelines, CGRPs, and probity principles.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Research Partnership**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- OFW ensured that appropriate management strategies were in place for any declared or identified conflicts and the SAP Chair determined the treatment of any conflicts as they arose.

Date:	XX March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy, First Assistant Secretary
Branch/Section:	Gender Equality Strategy and Reform / Working for Women Grants
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Nil

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF INTERNATIONAL

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

CSW

- The 69th session of the Commission on the status of Women (CSW69), took place in New York, USA from 10-21 March 2025.
- The delegation to CSW69 also previously attended Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review in Bangkok in November 2024.
- Padma attended CSW69 from 10-18 March and her program included:
    - delivering Australia's National Statement;
    - participating in a range of events, including the launch of Women Deliver 2026, and delivering an intervention at an interactive dialogue on freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes; and
    - attending a range of bilateral meetings.
- CSW69 was a 'review year', meaning the outcome documents included:
    - a Political Declaration, which was adopted on the first day of CSW69 (10 March); and
    - a Multi-Year Programme of Work, outlining the areas of focus for CSW over the next five years.

CEDAW

- OFW leads on Australia's obligation to periodically report on Australia's implementation of CEDAW.
    - Australia's ninth periodic report was submitted on 3 March 2025.
    - The report can be found on the PM&C website and the CEDAW Reporting website.
- The Committee will invite Australia to appear to speak to the report. Timing of the appearance is at the discretion of the Committee.
- Australia will *not* be examined on the report at the Pacific CEDAW Committee meeting 7-11 April 2025 in Fiji.
- The Government funded the National Women's Alliances to produce an independent shadow report on the Government's CEDAW implementation.
    - The National Rural Women's Alliance led development of the report with input from the other five National Women's Alliances.
    - This report was submitted directly to the CEDAW Committee on 7 March 2025 by the National Women's Alliances.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF INTERNATIONAL
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Contributing to International Efforts on Gender Equality

Subject/Issue

The Office for Women (OFW) strategically engages in regional and multilateral forums to advance Australia's gender equality priorities.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on the *International Gender Equality Strategy,* which was launched on 5 February 2025, to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

OFW Role

- *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (Working for Women) is underpinned by Australia's longstanding international commitments to securing and advancing the human rights of women and girls' and achieving gender equality.
- OFW advances Australia's commitment to work with and influence the international community to achieve gender equality and ensure women's and girl's empowerment is at the centre of our international efforts through:
    - leading Australia's periodic reporting under the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW);
    - leading Australia's report to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific assessing progress on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA);
    - participating in the annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); and
    - showcasing Australia's domestic work across international fora.
- OFW works closely with DFAT on Australia's position on gender issues in international engagement.

CSW

- OFW is working across government to support Australia's delegation to the 69th session of CSW, taking place in New York, USA from 10-21 March 2025.

  - The delegation is anticipated to be an officials level delegation, which will include representatives from across government, including OFW and DFAT, and civil society representatives.
- CSW69 is a 'review year', meaning the outcome documents include:
  - a Political Declaration, to be negotiated prior to CSW and adopted on the first day of CSW69 (10 March); and
  - a Multi-Year Programme of Work, which will outline the areas of focus for CSW over the next five years.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action National-Level Review

- Australia's national review on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was submitted on 18 July 2024.[1]
- Australia's national review contributed to the Asia-Pacific regional review on the implementation of the BPfA, which was launched at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review (in Bangkok from 19-21 November 2024).
- The regional report will feed into a global review of implementation of the BPfA, to be presented at CSW69 in March 2025.
- Australia sent a delegation to the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review in Bangkok, led by the Executive Director of the Office for Women, Ms Padma Raman.

CEDAW

- OFW leads on Australia's obligation to periodically report on Australia's implementation of CEDAW.
  - The submission timing of Australia's ninth periodic report is a matter for government.
  - Following submission, the CEDAW Secretariat will publish the report on the CEDAW Reporting Website.
- The Committee will invite Australia to appear to speak to the report. Timing of the appearance is at the discretion of the Committee.
- The Government funded the National Women's Alliances to produce an independent shadow report on the Government's implementation of CEDAW. The National Rural Women's Alliance led development of the report with input from the other five National Women's Alliances. This report will be submitted directly to the CEDAW Committee by the National Women's Alliances.

[1] Beijing +30 Gender Equality Report | Ministers' media centre

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF INTERNATIONAL
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

International Gender Equality Strategy

- OFW has been consulted on the strategy's development over the last 18 months.
- The International Strategy sets the strategic direction for Australia's international engagement on gender equality across foreign policy, trade, peace and security, consular, development, and humanitarian assistance.
- The International Strategy focuses on five priorities:
    - Advance women's health, rights and safety from sexual and gender-based violence;
    - Pursue gender equality for a peaceful and stable world;
    - Deliver climate action and humanitarian assistance that responds to the needs of all;
    - Promote women's economic equality and inclusive trade; and
    - Support locally led approaches to women's leadership.
- The International Strategy replaces the 2016 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy and is closely aligned to *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF INTERNATIONAL

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Background

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

- CSW is the premier global forum on gender policy issues.
- CSW69 will mark the 30th anniversary of the BPfA therefore the focus of CSW69 will be on the review and appraisal of the global implementation of BPfA.
    - The review will include an assessment of current challenges affecting implementation of BPfA and the achievement of gender equality.

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review (Beijing+30)

- Beijing+30 in Bangkok brought together Ministers, senior officials, civil society organisations, academia, the private sector, UN entities, independent experts and other key stakeholders from across the Asia-Pacific.
- OFW supported the Australian delegation's attendance at Beijing+30.
- Ms Padma Raman PSM, OFW Executive Director, was head of Australia's delegation and was supported by:
    - Ms Stephanie Copus Campbell AM, Ambassador for Gender Equality;
    - Dr Anna Cody, Sex Discrimination Commissioner;
    - Clare Gibellini, civil society representative from Women with Disabilities Australia; and
    - Joslyn Eades-Tass, civil society representative from National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
- The two civil society organisation (CSO) representatives were selected through a merit-based expression of interest process.
    - National Women's Alliances were invited to nominate up to two members, against a list of criteria, to join Australia's official delegation.
        - A panel within OFW reviewed applications against the criteria, with selection being approved by OFW's Executive Director.
    - The expression of interest included the potential for the selected delegates to join Australia's official delegation at CSW69, unless the CSO delegate failed to meet their obligations at Beijing+30.
- Ms Raman's program included:
    - delivering Australia's national statement;
    - participating in a range of events including as a member of the panel on re-imagining social protections for migrant women;

- conducting a range of bilateral meetings; and
- attending engagements including meetings with Thai-based UN agencies, Human Rights Organisations, civil society groups working to support women experiencing gender-based violence, and Thai women in politics to discuss the importance of women's leadership and representation in decision-making roles.

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review (APEC)

- Australia also initiated the APEC Gender Equality Structural Reform Voluntary Principles and Recommendations to Advance Women's Economic Empowerment, which was endorsed by APEC Ministers in November 2024.
    - These Principles establish a framework for further action and collaboration for APEC economies as we work to improve outcomes for women and girls, in all their diversity.

CEDAW ninth periodic report

- Australia received a List of Issues Prior to Reporting from the Committee in late March 2023. The issues related to challenges experienced by women and girls in Australia and were the foundation of Australia's ninth periodic report. The report was originally due in March 2024.
- Australia sought (and received) a six-month extension to allow for inclusion of Working for Women and National Cabinet commitments made in September 2024 to advance the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.* The extension also allowed OFW to conduct further consultations with Commonwealth agencies and state and territory governments, in addition to publishing the report for public consultation. Extensions are commonly sought and granted.
- The Australian Government funded an independent 'shadow report' through the National Women's Alliances.
    - The shadow report is an investment in transparent democracy and accountability on gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
    - The Alliances agreed amongst themselves that the National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC) would lead the shadow report process. $100,000 was been provided to the NRWC to support this work, including disbursing funding allocations to the other five National Women's Alliances to support their contributions to the report.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF INTERNATIONAL

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Date: 6 Feb 2025

Cleared by (SES): Rochelle White

Branch/Section: Gender Based Violence and Social Policy Branch

Contact Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Telephone No: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Consultation: N/A

Gender Definition

Subject/Issue

The definition of gender has evolved over time and has been the subject of ongoing public commentary.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on gender identity in the 2026 Census to the Deputy Secretary of the Economy, Industry and Resilience Group for PM&C.

OFW Role

- The Office for Women's (OFW) use of the word 'woman' includes all persons who identify as women, whether or not their sex at birth was recorded as female.
    - OFW takes this approach because people who identify as a woman experience different and intersecting barriers to gender equality, and this requires targeted responses.
- The issue of gender identity is sensitive and requires careful treatment to avoid negatively impacting people in the community who may already experience exclusion and discrimination based on their gender identity.

Key points

- OFW's approach to defining gender is consistent with other parts of the public service, including the Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).
- The *Sex Discrimination Act* prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex status, and marital or relationship status in many areas of public life, including employment, education and in the provision of goods, services and facilities.
- The *Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender,* compiled by the Attorney General's Department, were developed to assist all departments and agencies that maintain personal records (including employee records), and/or collect sex and/or gender information to meet their obligations under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (the Sex Discrimination Act).
    - The Guidelines commenced on 1 July 2013, with Australian Government departments and agencies to be compliant with the Guidelines by 1 July 2016.

  - There have been no updates to the current version of the Guidelines since 2015. The decision to update the Guidelines is a matter for Government.
  - The Guidelines recognise that individuals may identify as and be recognised within the community as a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth or during infancy, or as a gender that is not exclusively male or female.

- The ABS released the *Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables 2020* in January 2021.
  - The ABS Standard states that 'gender is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience as a man, woman or non-binary person. A person's gender may differ from their sex and may also differ from what is indicated on their legal documents'.
  - Office for Women promotes the use of this Standard for collection of gender-disaggregated data.
  - The ABS Standard was informed by the 2013 Guidelines but has incorporated developments to appropriate terminology and language.
  - It can be used by government, academic and private sector organisations in their statistical collections to improve the comparability and quality of data when collecting statistics.
  - The Standard was used by ABS to collect non-binary sex data for the first time in the 2021 Census.
- Ensuring policy achieves its intended goals requires a nuanced application of a gender lens.
  - For example, initiatives related to health may require consideration of biology, whereas employment and economic equality activities can take a more inclusive approach.

Attachments

Attachment A: 2026 Census and questions on gender identity

Date:	XX Feb 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Megan Leahy
Branch/Section:	Strategy, Norms and Evidence
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Attorney-General's Department

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **Gender Definition**
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Background

Private Senator's bill to amend the Sex Discrimination Act

On 12 September 2024, Senator Hanson introduced a private member's Bill to Parliament – the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Acknowledging Biological Reality) Bill 2024. This bill sought to remove gender identity from the Sex Discrimination Act. The Government chose to oppose hearing the bill. The Minister for Women advised this decision was taken for the following reasons:

> *When you have bills that seek to harm people, including young people, we will draw the line. That is a red line for us – we do not apologise.*
>
> *We know how vulnerable the gender-diverse community is. We know how they struggle, we not think the Senate is a qualified place for that debate. That debate should be had at home, with friends, with professionals, with health professionals that seek to guide some of those decisions.*

Data

- In December 2024, the ABS released its first estimates and characteristics of trans and gender diverse populations in Australia.
- 0.9 per cent of Australians aged 16 years and over are estimated to be trans or gender diverse (around 178,900 people). Of these:
    - 37.5 per cent are trans men
    - 29.3 per cent are trans women
    - 32.7 per cent are non-binary people.[1]

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), Estimates and characteristics of LGBTI+ populations in Australia, ABS Website, accessed 31 January 2025.

Attachment A: Timeline regarding 2026 Census and questions on gender identity

2021

- The 2021 Census was the first to allow respondents to select something other than male or female as their sex by providing 'non-binary' as a third option. There were no questions about gender and how people identify

2022

- In Labor's national platform, the Australian Government committed to include questions on gender and sexual identity in the 2026 Census

26 Aug 2024

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) advised topics would remain unchanged from the 2021 Census following an announcement from Government*

30 Aug 2024

- The Prime Minister stated the ABS would test a topic on 'sexual orientation and gender' for inclusion in the 2026 Census

3 Sept 2024

- The ABS met with the Office for Women (OFW) to provide an information update
- OFW did not provide the Prime Minister or the Minister for Women with advice on this issue

8 Sept 2024

- Following the testing, Assistant Minister Leigh announced the Government's decision to include new questions on gender, sexual orientation and variations of sex characteristics**

* Changes to 2024 Census Testing Plans | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
** New Topic in the 2026 Census - Media Release - Andrew Leigh MP

ECEC Reforms

Subject/Issue

The Government is committed to building an affordable, accessible, high quality and universal early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

Implementing the 3 day guarantee and abolishing the activity test, is an important step towards a universal early childhood education and care system.

Handling Advice

Refer questions on ECEC to the Department of Education.

OFW Role

- OFW provides policy advice on the gendered dimensions of ECEC, particularly on the implications on women's workforce participation.

Key points

- Under *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality,* the Government is working to ensure "parents and carers have access to affordable and high-quality early childhood education and care services"
- ECEC is a critical enabler of women's workforce participation. 28 per cent of parents stayed out of the workforce to care for children in 2022 because the cost of ECEC was too high.
- Appropriate, affordable and accessible ECEC has a range of benefits for women. These include:
    - enabling parents to find work, return to work or increase their workforce participation in the labour market
    - reducing career breaks during motherhood and decreasing the gender pay gap
    - improving women's financial security in the short and long-term, helping to reduce financial dependency and the retirement income gap, and
    - providing cost-of-living relief to families through affordable ECEC, particularly benefitting vulnerable families whose children benefit the most from ECEC.
- The ECEC sector is one of the most highly feminised occupations in Australia, with women making up over 96 per cent of the workforce.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF ECEC Reforms
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

- In improving access to affordable and high-quality ECEC, the Government has made significant investments in 2024-25 MYEFO including:
    - $1 billion to establish the Building Early Education Fund to increase the supply of high-quality ECEC places across Australia.
    - $291.2 million to replace the existing **Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test with a new 3 Day Guarantee**.
        - On 13 February 2025, the Early Childhood Education and Care (Three Day Guarantee) Bill 2025 passed parliament. On 20 February 2025, the Bill received Royal Assent.
        - From 5 January 2026, all CCS eligible families will get 3 days of subsidised care each week for each child; and families caring for First Nations children will get 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight for each child.
    - $3.6 billion to fund a wage increase for eligible ECEC workers through a Worker Retention Payment.
    - In the October 2022-23 Budget, the Government committed $4.7 billion to Cheaper Child Care by lifting the CCS rate and extending the CCS taper rate.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF ECEC Reforms
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Background

Building a Universal Early Education and Care System

- On 11 December 2024, the Prime Minister announced the Government's next steps to building a universal early education and care system.
- New measures funded through the 2024-25 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) update include:
    - $1 billion to establish the Building Early Education Fund to increase the supply of high-quality ECEC places across Australia, especially in underserved markets from July 2025.
    - $291.2 million over three years from 2025-26 (and $129.0 million per year ongoing) to replace the existing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test with a new 3 Day Guarantee from January 2026.
        - On 13 February 2025, the Early Childhood Education and Care (Three Day Guarantee) Bill 2025 passed parliament. This Bill ensures children have access to 3 days a week of subsidised ECEC. On 20 February 2025, the Bill received Royal Assent.
        - From 5 January 2026, all CCS eligible families will get 3 days of subsidised care each week for each child; and families caring for First Nations children will get 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight for each child.
        - This change will remove a barrier to women's workforce participation, provide cost-of-living relief to families and help ensure children can access the benefits of high-quality ECEC.
        - The Government expects the new guarantee to benefit around 66,700 families in its first full financial year, with more than 100,000 families eligible for additional hours of care.
    - $10.4 million over three years from 2024-25 to develop the Early Education Service Delivery Price to determine the reasonable cost of providing high-quality ECEC and underpin future reform.
    - $6.4 million over two years from 2025-26 to Services Australia to upgrade the CCS system to support the reforms.
- These changes have been informed by the Productivity Commission's inquiry report *A pathway to universal early childhood education and*

care, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's 2023 *Childcare Inquiry,* the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce Final Report, and the 2024 Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee Report.

- In the 2024-25 Budget, the Government committed $3.6 billion over four years to funding a wage increase for eligible ECEC workers through a Worker Retention Payment.
    - This will deliver a 10 per cent increase on top of the current national award rate in the first year from December 2024 and a further 5 per cent in the second year from December 2025. (Refer to *Care Workforce Wages* SB25-000004 for further detail)

<u>Early Years Strategy</u>

- The Government has developed an Early Years Strategy 2024-2034 (the Strategy), which sets out the Government's vision to best support Australia's children and their families.
    - Launched on 7 May 2024, the Strategy articulates how the Government will prioritise and support child-centred policy development, and target investment in early years supports and services over the next 10 years.
    - The Strategy will be implemented through three action plans over 10 years to provide practical steps developed in the context of the vision and priorities of the Strategy.
        - The First Action Plan 2024-2027 was released on 11 December 2024.
        - The Second Action Plan is expected to cover the period from 2027 to 2030 and the Third Action Plan is expected to cover the period from 2030 to 2034.

<u>Cheaper Childcare Investments</u>

- In the October 2022-23 Budget, the Government committed $4.7 billion to Cheaper Child Care. Cheaper Child Care, which commenced 10 July 2023, made child care more affordable for working families by:
    - Lifting the maximum CCS rate to 90 per cent for the first child in care;
    - Extending the CCS taper rate to families earning up to $530,000 in household income;
    - Extending the increased subsidy to outside school hours care;

- Keeping higher child care subsidy rates for the second and additional children in care;
- Increasing the amount of subsidised ECEC available to First Nations families from 0 or 24 to 36 hours a fortnight, regardless of a family's income or activity level.

- In the 2023-24 Budget, the Government also invested $72.4 million to support the skills and training of workers in the ECEC sector.

Date:	24 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Angela Hope
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy Branch, Employment and Social Services
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	PM&C Schools and Early Childhood Education.

Flexible Work

Subject/Issue

Flexible working practices can be key enablers of gender equality, supporting more women to stay in the workforce, and more men to take on a greater share of caring responsibilities.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on the Fair Work Act to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), and questions about the Australian Public Service (APS) uptake of flexible work arrangements to the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC).

OFW Role

- OFW provides policy advice on the gendered dimensions of flexible work, and its implications for women's workforce participation.
- This is in line with the outcome under *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* to narrow the gender pay gap.

Key points

- Remote working and other flexible working practices are key enablers of gender equality, supporting more women to stay in the workforce and increase their hours, and more men to take on a greater share of caring responsibilities.
- The Government supports flexible work through legislation and practice:
    - Under the Fair Work Act, relevant employees covered by the National Employment Standards have the right to request a change in their working arrangements, specifically the hours, patterns and locations of work, in certain circumstances. These rights were strengthened by the Secure Jobs, Better Pay reforms (for further information, refer to the Workplace Relations Reform QB25-000003).
    - In October 2023, the Fair Work Ombudsman developed a Flexible Working Arrangements Best Practice Guide for managers and employers.
    - In March 2023, the Secretaries Board endorsed a service-wide, principles-based approach to embedding flexibility into ways of working in the APS.

  - Since 2023-24, there have been common clauses in agency enterprise agreements relating to equal parental leave entitlements, flexible work, family and domestic violence support and respect at work.

- Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) November 2024 Gender Equality Scorecard showed that 87 per cent of Australian private sector employers with 100 or more employees have flexible working strategies.
- The 2024 APS Employee Census showed that 76 per cent of APS employees access some form of flexible work arrangements.
- Fair Work Commission analysis prepared for the Modern Awards Review 2023-24, showed that overall rates of working from home increased between 2019 and 2023, from 24.6 to 31.5 per cent.
  - As of August 2023, 34.2 per cent of female employees and 28.9 per cent of male employees regularly work from home.

Background

Benefits of flexible working arrangements for women

- As outlined in the 2023 Women's Economic Equality Taskforce final report to Government, remote working and other flexible working practices can be key enablers of gender equality, supporting more women to stay in the workforce, and more men to take on a greater share of caring responsibilities.
    - Research from Chief Executive Women shows that women are nearly three times more likely to use a flexible working arrangement to manage caring responsibilities than men (80 per cent compared to 28 per cent).[1]
    - Broader research shows: women are more likely to seek flexible working arrangements than men,[2] men are more likely to have their requests refused[3], and men are less willing to seek flexibility because they fear it could affect job security.[4]
- Chief Executive Women's research suggests that organisations that have embraced equitable flexible work arrangements retain and attract the best talent.[5]
    - When all employees worked remotely during the pandemic, 57 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women said the workplace became more gender equitable.[6]
- Flexible work arrangements can keep women engaged in the workforce, which positively affects performance. However, if flexible work practices are not designed, offered, practised, or encouraged equally by men, they can intensify inequities in the workplace. This could include limiting the job options or type of work women can do or preventing women from working to their desired level.[7]
- ***Productivity:*** Research has shown that people who work from home allocate 40 per cent of their saved commuting time to their jobs, and

---

[1] *Equitable Flexibility: Reshaping our workforce,* Chief Executive Women, Bain & Company 2021, bain_brief_equitable_flexibility_reshaping_our_workforce.pdf

[2] 'The State of Flex 2020', Diversity Council Australia https://www.dca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/the_state_of_flex_2020_0.pdf

[3] Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 'Rebuilding Flexible Workplaces: Lessons for the Post-COVID Workplace' (Survey Snapshot 1, March 2021) 8 ('Rebuilding Flexible Workplaces').

[4] Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 'Supporting Gender Equality Lessons for the Post-COVID Workplace' (Survey Snapshot 2, March 2021) 5 ('Supporting Gender Equality').

[5] *Equitable Flexibility: Reshaping our workforce,* Chief Executive Women, Bain & Company 2021

[6] Ibid

[7] *Equitable Flexibility: Reshaping our workforce,* Chief Executive Women, Bain & Company 2021

about 11 per cent to caring activities, with people with children allocating more of their time savings to caring.[8]

Increase in WFH arrangements and women working full-time

- Prior to the pandemic in 2019, Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey data demonstrated that 25.2 per cent of employed people did some work from home. This rose to 37.3 per cent in 2021, before falling to 34.2 per cent in 2022[9].
    - Increasing prevalence of working from home has coincided with a marked increase in women's participation, particularly those in, or actively looking, for full-time employment.
    - The share of women participating full-time increased by 2.3 percentage points between the start of the pandemic and February 2025 — more than double the increase in the overall participation rate of 1 percentage point over the same period.
    - Around 630,000 more women are working full time than prior to the pandemic.

Date:	24 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy Branch, Employment and Social Services
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; Workplace Relations and Small Business PM&C team.

[8] C G Aksoy et al, 'Time Savings When Working from Home', *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 2023, 113:597–603.

[9] R Wilkins et al, 'The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 22', *Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, The University of Melbourne*, 2024

HELP and FEE FREE TAFE – Gender lens

Subject/Issue

Women hold 59 per cent of the total outstanding HELP debt. Women take longer to pay their debt because they have lower post graduate incomes and take time out of the workforce for caring responsibilities.

Key Changes

- On 2 November 2024, the Government announced it will reduce the amount Australians with a student debt have to repay per year and raise the threshold for when people need to start repaying the debt, subject to the passage of legislation.
    - The minimum threshold for repayments will change from $54,435 in 2024-25 to $67,000 in 2025-26.
    - Repayments will be calculated on income above $67,000 only, rather than being based on total annual income.
    - For someone on an income of $70,000 this will mean they will pay around $1,300 less per year in repayments.
- On 3 November 2024, the Government announced it will reduce every Australian's HELP or student loan debt by 20 per cent effective from 1 July 2025, subject to the passage of legislation.
- These measures build on the existing 2024-25 Budget measure to limit the indexation of HELP to the lower of the Consumer Price Index or the Wage Price Index, effective from 1 June 2023.
- On 4 November 2024, the Government announced it will introduce legislation to establish Fee-Free TAFE as an enduring feature of the national vocational education and training system, funding 100,000 Fee-Free TAFE places a year from 2027.
    - Legislation was introduced into the House of Representatives on 7 November 2024 and passed the House of Representatives on 5 February 2025.

Key Gender Points

- The Budget 2024-25 and MYEFO 2024-25 HELP changes will have a slight disproportionate **positive impact on women.**
- 61 per cent of HELP debtors are women and they hold around 59 per cent of the total outstanding HELP debt.
- **Limiting the indexation rate** will have an increased positive impact on women who typically take longer to repay their HELP debt due to historic underpayment in feminised industries, occupational segregation and caring responsibilities.
    - Of the around $3.0 billion in student debt expected to be written off under the Budget 2024-25 measure, more than half of this is held by women.
- Women will continue to benefit from the **Fee-Free TAFE places as a priority cohort**.
    - From January 2023 to 30 September 2024, there has been more than 568,400 Fee-Free TAFE enrolments for courses in priority areas, with 62.5 per cent being taken up by women.
    - Enrolments in priority areas include:
        - 150,985 in care – including disability and aged care
        - 54,795 in digital and tech
        - 40,766 in early childhood education and care.
        - 39,231 in construction
        - 22,114 in agriculture
- While women's enrolment in male dominated fields continue to be low, data published by National Centre for Vocational Education Research in October 2024 found that almost 80 per cent more women are training as apprentices in male-dominated trades, and women starting apprenticeships as electricians are up 115 per cent compared to 2019.

Date: 13/02/2025
Cleared by (SES): Angela Hope
Branch/Section: Women's Economic Policy/Office for Women
Contact Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

Subject/Issue

The Government-funded Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme is being expanded and reformed to encourage increased uptake by fathers and to increase women's retirement incomes.

Handling Advice

Refer questions on PPL to the Department of Social Services.

OFW Role

- OFW provides policy advice on the gendered dimensions of PPL, and its implications for women's workforce participation and retirement incomes.
- This is in line with the outcome under *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* to narrow the gender gap in the use and access to PPL and the ambition to close the retirement income gap.

Key points

- PPL supports working parents (particularly mothers) around the time their child is born/adopted. The availability of Government-funded PPL for birth and non-birth parents in Australia:
    - recognises taking time off to care for a child is an important and usual course of life for both parents,
    - promotes equality between men and women and balance between work and family life,
    - supports women's workforce participation through connection to an employer, and
    - enables employers to retain valuable and skilled staff by encouraging them to stay connected with their workplace when they become parents.
- In reforming Paid Parental Leave, the Government has made significant investments, including:
    - $1.1 billion over four years from 2024-25, to pay superannuation on Government Funded Paid Parental Leave, commencing 1 July 2025.
    - $79.5 million over four years (and $35 million per year ongoing) to expand the PPL scheme to 26 weeks by 1 July 2026.
    - $531.6 million over four years from 2022-23 (and $619.3 million per year ongoing) to reform the scheme into a 20 week, gender neutral entitlement from 1 July 2023.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **PAID PARENTAL LEAVE**
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Superannuation on Paid Parental Leave

- In the 2024-25 Budget, the Government invested $1.1 billion over four years from 2024-25 (and 0.6 billion per year ongoing from 2028–29) to pay superannuation on Government-funded PPL for births and adoptions on or after 1 July 2025. This was announced alongside the release of *Working for Women.*
    - On 1 October 2024, the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Adding Superannuation for a More Secure Retirement) Act 2024 received Royal Assent, after passing Parliament on 19 September 2024.
    - All recipients of Government funded PPL will be eligible for the payment, regardless of gender.
        - In 2022-23, around 66 per cent of PPL recipients were women.
        - Women aged 60 to 64 have a median superannuation balance of around 25 per cent less than men of the same age.
        - Paying an annual superannuation payment of 12 per cent on the full partnered entitlement of 22 weeks will increase a median earning mother's superannuation balance at retirement by around $4,250, or 1.15 per cent.

Expanding Paid Parental leave

- In the 2023-24 MYEFO, the Government invested a further $79.5 million over four years (and $35 million per year ongoing) to expand the PPL scheme to 26 weeks by 1 July 2026.
    - On 20 March 2024, the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (More Support for Working Families) Act 2024 received Royal Assent, after passing Parliament on 18 March 2024.
    - This amendment supports the expansion of the PPL scheme to 26 weeks by 1 July 2026 and reinstates the work test exception for fathers and partners of children born prematurely.
    - Each parent will ultimately receive four weeks of reserved leave, with the remaining leave able to be shared however parents choose. Parents will also be able to take 4 weeks leave concurrently.
- In the October 2022-23 Budget, the Government invested $531.6 million over four years from 2022-23 (and $619.3 million per year ongoing) for reforms to the PPL scheme.

- On 10 March 2023, the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Improvements for Families and Gender Equality) Act 2023 received Royal Assent, after passing Parliament on 6 March 2023.
- This amendment combined the PPL scheme into a single 20-week gender-neutral entitlement from 1 July 2023.
- The scheme was also made more flexible, by allowing parents to take the entitlement in blocks as small as one day at a time, with periods of work in-between, within two years of the child's birth or adoption.
- The Government also expanded eligibility for PPL by introducing a family income test, which claimants can be assessed under if they do not meet the individual income test (details at background).

- These changes are consistent with advice from the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce (refer to WEET Backpocket Brief).
- A summary of PPL changes is at Attachment A.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **PAID PARENTAL LEAVE**
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Background

Current PPL settings

- The Parental Leave Pay (PLP) rate is based on the hourly rate of the national minimum wage (NMW). The current payment is $183.16 per day before tax, or $915.90 per 5 day week.
- To be eligible for PLP, recipients must be caring for a newborn or adopted child, and be one of the following:
    - The birth mother of the newborn child
    - The partner of the birth mother
    - The child's biological father
    - The partner of the child's biological father
    - The child's adoptive parent
    - The partner of an adoptive parent
    - Gaining parents in a surrogacy arrangement
    - The partner of a gaining parent in a surrogacy arrangement, or
    - A person caring for a child under exceptional circumstances.
- They must also satisfy:
    - The income test: individual taxable income of $175,788 or less in the 2023-24 financial year, or a combined adjustable income of up to $364,350 in the 2023-24 financial year; and
    - The work test: have worked for 10 of the 13 months before the birth, and have worked a minimum of 330 hours (around 1 day per week) in the 10 months before the birth.

Previous PPL settings

- Prior to the changes on 1 July 2023, the Government-funded PPL scheme comprised of 2 payments, paid at the same NMW rate:
    - Parental Leave Pay for up to 18 weeks to the birth parent; and
    - Dad and Partner Pay (DaPP) for up to 2 weeks for fathers and partners.
- Uptake of the Government's former PPL Scheme was highly gender-segregated with women making up 99 per cent of PLP recipients and men making up 99 per cent of DaPP recipients.
    - In 2020–21, 89,784 fathers and partners received DaPP, accounting for only around 30 per cent of births in Australia. By contrast, 169,029 mothers received PLP, accounting for 57 per cent of births. [1]

[1] Department of Social Services (2021) *Annual report 2020-21,* Canberra, pp 99–101

- While employer-provided primary carers leave is becoming increasingly available to both men and women, only 17 per cent of those who took it in 2023–24 were men – an increase of 3 per cent from the previous year.[2]
- The proportion of employers offering paid parental leave, in addition to the government scheme, rose from 63% in 2022–23 to 68% in 2023–24.

Impact of parenthood

- Following parenthood, women typically make significant and long-term adjustments to their paid employment, while men's employment remains largely unchanged.
- Women's earnings are reduced by an average of 55 per cent in the first 5 years of parenthood. The financial penalty persists even among women who continue to work – their incomes are about 5 per cent lower than if they had not had children.[3]

Attachments

Attachment A: Summary of PPL changes

Date:	24 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Angela Hope
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy Branch, Employment and Social Services
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	PM&C Social Services

[2] WGEA (Workplace Gender Equality Agency) (2024) *Australia's gender equality scorecard 2023-24,* Sydney, Nov 2024.
[3] Bahar E, Deutscher N, Bradshaw N and Montaigne M (2022) *Children and the Gender Earnings Gap,* Treasury Round Up, October 2022.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **PAID PARENTAL LEAVE**
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Attachment A – Summary of PPL changes

SUMMARY OF PPL CHANGES

Timeframe	Details
From 1 July 2023 *Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Improvements for Families and Gender Equality) Act 2023* *Legislation passed Parliament on 6 March 2023, and received Royal Assent on 10 March 2023*	• Provide a **20-week Parental Leave Payment** (PLP) • **Two weeks of leave reserved for each parent** on a use it or lose it basis. • **Either parent able to claim PLP first,** with the permission from the birth mother or adoptive parent. • Allow parents to **claim up to two weeks of PLP concurrently**. • Allow parents to **claim PLP at the same time as employer-paid leave entitlements.** • **Allow a non-birth parent to receive PLP where they meet the residency and/or newly arrived waiting period requirements**, even if the birth parent does not. The birth parent will still need to meet the work test for either parent to be eligible. • **Increase flexibility** so parents can take the entitlement in blocks as small as a day at a time, with periods of work in-between, within two years of the child's birth or adoption. • Introduce a **family income test of $350,000**, which claimants can be assessed under if they do not meet the existing individual income test of $168,865 or less.
From 1 July 2024 *Paid Parental Leave Amendment (More Support for Working Families) Act 2024* *Legislation passed parliament on 18 March 2024, and received Royal Assent on 20 March 2024*	• An **additional two weeks will be added each year** from July 2024 to July 2026, increasing the overall length of PPL by six weeks. **2023-24** / **2024-25** / **2025-26** / **2026-27** **Total shared PPL weeks**: 20 / 22 / 24 / 26 **Reserved**: 2 / 2 / 3 / 4 **Concurrency**: 2 / 2 / 4 / 4 • Both parents will be able to share the leave entitlement, with a proportion reserved for each parent on a use it or lose it basis. Single parents will be able to access the full PLP entitlement at every stage of the reforms. • The following settings will apply: o On 1 July 2024, the maximum entitlement for a partnered parent increased from 18 weeks to 20 weeks, maintaining the reserved period and the concurrency limit at two weeks each; o On 1 July 2025, the maximum entitlement for a partnered parent will increase from 20 weeks to 21 weeks, the reserved period will increase to three weeks, and the concurrency limit will increase to four weeks; and o On 1 July 2026, the maximum entitlement for a partnered parent will increase from 21 weeks to 22 weeks, the reserved period will increase to four weeks, and the concurrency limit will be maintained at four weeks.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

From 1 July 2025 *Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Adding Superannuation for a More Secure Retirement) Act 2024* *Legislation passed Parliament on 19 September, and received Royal Assent on 1 October 2024*	• All recipients of Government funded PPL will be eligible for the **payment of the superannuation guarantee (will be 12 per cent) on their PPL**.

Parent Pathways

Subject/Issue

On 1 November 2024, ParentsNext was replaced with a new voluntary pre-employment service, Parent Pathways.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on ParentsNext and its voluntary replacement service, Parent Pathways, to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

OFW Role

- OFW Assistant Secretary, Women's Economic Policy, was a member of a Voluntary Pre-Employment Service Project Board to provide advice on the approach to consultation, design, and implementation of Parent Pathways.
- OFW seconded a staff member to DEWR from 24 May 2023 to 29 September 2023 to support policy development for Parent Pathways.

Key points

<u>Parent Pathways</u>

- Parent Pathways commenced on 1 November 2024 in 51 employment regions with 29 service providers, including the Australian Public Service Pilot in South Australia.
- It is a voluntary service that provides personalised support for personal, study or work goals to eligible parents and carers of young children under 6 years old.
- Parents have access to training, mentorship opportunities, financial support for materials, support to find and cover childcare costs, language and literacy programs and referrals on to other services.
- Parent Pathways had 16,710 participants as at 31 December 2024, with 74 per cent single parents and 18 per cent First Nations parents.
    - This caseload compares to ParentsNext caseloads of: 96,765 at 30 April 2023, before ParentsNext became voluntary (5 May 2023); and 73,510 at 31 October 2024, before Parent Pathways commenced (1 November 2024).
- A Parents Advisory Group will continue to contribute to the ongoing improvement of Parent Pathways to ensure parents' needs are being met.
- In line with the priority area "economic equality and security" in *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*, establishing Parent Pathways

as a voluntary service responds to the needs of parents of young children and supports them to prepare for or return to work, while prioritising the care of their child.

Differences between Parent Pathways and ParentsNext

- Parent Pathways is a voluntary pre-employment program. If a parent or carer chooses to participate, they can also choose to leave, take a break or come back at any time.
- This is in contrast to ParentsNext, where participants were subject to payment suspensions when mandatory activities were not met.
- From 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 (while ParentsNext was still mandatory), 31,784 participants had their payment suspended. This represents approximately 33 per cent of participants in the program:
    - 93.8 per cent of these suspensions were applied to women and 81.4 per cent were single parents.
    - 31 per cent of these suspensions applied to First Nations parents, much higher than their share of the caseload.
- Eligibility for Parent Pathways is broader than ParentsNext and targets support to parents whose youngest child is under six years of age, are not currently in paid work, and live in a non-remote Employment Region, and are:
    - recipients of Parenting Payment Single, Parenting Payment Partnered, Carer Payment or Special Benefit Payment; or
    - not receiving an income support payment and are under 22 years of age; an early school leaver (parents who have not attained a Year 12 or Certificate III qualification); or are First Nations parents.
- ParentsNext eligibility was dependent on a participant having had received a Parenting Payment for the previous 6 months.

APS Delivery Pilot

- An APS Delivery Service Pilot commenced in Playford, South Australia, on 1 November 2024.
    - Parent Pathways is now being delivered by the Government in various locations in Playford, Gawler, and surrounding local government areas in South Australia.
- A concurrent evaluation process of the pilot is taking place and will provide Government with valuable data on the provision of services.
- Further questions on the implementation of the pilot and engagement with participants and providers should be referred to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Background

Stakeholder views on ParentsNext

- The Government's decision to abolish ParentsNext and to develop a voluntary replacement service is consistent with the recommendations of the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee, the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce, the interim report of the House Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services and the final report of the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care.

Timeline

- On 1 November 2024, ParentsNext was formally replaced by Parent Pathways, a new voluntary service that provides support to eligible parents and carers.

2023-24 MYEFO

- On 7 December 2023, a joint Media Release from Ministers Burke and Gallagher announced the Government would commence the replacement service from 1 November 2024, and extend ParentsNext to 31 October 2024 to facilitate continuity of support.

2023-24 Budget

- On 4 May 2023, the Government announced it will abolish the ParentsNext program and develop a replacement service.
    - As a first step, on 5 May 2023, compulsory aspects of ParentsNext were paused. This meant that participants were no longer subject to payment suspensions or penalties for not engaging with (formerly) mandatory activities under ParentsNext, such as attending appointments.

Date:	11 February 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Angela Hope
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy Branch, Employment and Social Services
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Veterans and Employment Services Team

Design of Parent Pathways

Service features

The features of Parent Pathways responds directly to feedback gathered from parents and includes:

- voluntary participation
- a flexible service that values parents' caring role
- support by suitably qualified and experienced mentors
- 'meets parents where they are at' – both in location and in their lives
- clear information and choice about supports that are available
- support for parents to make their own choices in deciding their future
- practical financial support to parents, including:
    - The **Individual Fund** assigned to the parent, to assist them to engage in the new service and build their capability, and
    - The **Pooled Fund**, which will provide financial assistance for pre-employment supports and will be administered by service providers in consultation with parents.

Eligibility

To be eligible, parents must:

- have a child aged under 6
- not be in paid employment
- live in a non-remote area.

Parents should be getting one of these payments:

- Parenting Payment
- Carer Payment
- Special Benefit.

Parents are also eligible if not getting a Centrelink payment, and are either:

- under 22 years old
- an early school leaver (parents who don't have a Year 12 qualification)
- First Nations.

Supporting ongoing feedback and continuous improvement

Embedded in Parent Pathways are features to support direct feedback about the service from parents with lived experience, and to support community organisations to deliver a quality service.

Parents Advisory Group

A Parents Advisory Group was consulted throughout the development of Parent Pathways. This ensured parents with lived experience, and key stakeholders, were able to contribute to the development, and future improvement of Parent Pathways.

The Parents Advisory Group is made up of community organisations, parent representatives and an academic. Community organisations represented are:

- Antipoverty Centre
- Australian Council of Social Service
- Brave Foundation
- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Council of Single Mothers and their Children

- Settlement Council of Australia
- Single Mother Families Australia

The Parents Advisory Group will continue to contribute to the ongoing improvement of Parent Pathways to ensure parents' needs are being met. Parents Advisory Group members will provide input to the evaluation strategy for Parent Pathways.

Evaluation and capacity building
Parent Pathways will undergo formal evaluation and ongoing monitoring.
DEWR will work with providers to build and maintain capacity and foster continuous improvement in providing support for parents.
DEWR have established a Community of Practice, comprised of one representative nominated by and from each Provider.

Delivery
Parent Pathways will be culturally competent, accessible, and provide for the needs of parents and their children. Clear information about the services will be made available to parents.

Service providers
Parent Pathways is being delivered in 51 Employment Regions with 29 service providers, including the Australian Public Service Pilot in South Australia.

- 1 provider (Whittlesea Community Connections) is new to the employment services market.
- 22 providers are not-for-profit and 6 providers are for-profit organisations.
- 5 providers are First Nations owned organisations. Collectively with First Nations subcontractors, they will service an anticipated 19.6% of the indicative caseload.

Australian Public Service delivery pilot
The Australian Public Service (APS) Delivery Service Pilot commenced in Playford, South Australia, on 1 November 2024. Parent Pathways is now being delivered by the Government in various locations in Playford, Gawler, and surrounding local government areas in South Australia. This allows APS capability building and leadership, a channel for direct feedback about the service, and the ability to trial new approaches.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Subject/Issue

The Government is committed to ensuring development and deployment of AI which maximises benefits and minimises risks of harms to individuals and groups, including women.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on the Government's coordinated approach to safe and responsible AI, including mandatory guardrails and the AI Capability Plan to the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
- Refer other questions on the workforce impacts of AI to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)

Key points

- AI presents both risks and opportunities for women and gender equality.
- The Government recognises that AI that is poorly designed, trained, and deployed can pose a particular risk to women. This includes biased and discriminatory outputs and decisions.
- Research shows AI is expected to have differing impacts on men and women in the workforce, and that women's roles are likely to be disproportionately impacted or displaced by AI automation.
- AI also has the potential to improve women's safety and reduce gender inequality – including through its use to combat abuse of women on digital platforms, enhancing access to healthcare and education, and reducing gender biases in decision-making processes, such as hiring.
- On 21 August 2024, Parliament passed the *Criminal Code Amendment (Deepfake Sexual Material) Bill 2024* creating new criminal offences to ban the creation and sharing of non-consensual deepfake sexually explicit material, including material altered or created using technology such as AI.
    - The new laws came into effect on 3 September 2024.
    - Women and girls are overwhelmingly the targets of non-consensual pornographic deepfake images and videos. The Government recognises that digitally created and altered sexually explicit material that is shared without consent is a damaging form of abuse against women and girls that can inflict deep harm on victims.[1]

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

OFW Role

- OFW has engaged with DISR and across Government to ensure risks and opportunities for women are considered in AI policy responses and reforms.
- OFW is engaging with DISR on the following:
    - development of an AI Capability Plan, announced by the Government on 16 December 2024[1], which includes the objective of boosting AI skills, education and literacy.
    - the co-design panel for the new iteration of the Voluntary AI Safety Standard, including specific guidance for AI developers to make products "safe by design" with practical guidance on testing, transparency and accountability;
        - OFW provided feedback on the first iteration of the Voluntary AI Safety Standard, published on 5 September 2024, which provides guidance to businesses and other AI deployers to implement AI in a safe and responsible way.
- DISR has consulted with OFW on the Government response to the Senate Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence final report, handed down on 26 November 2024, and interim report released in October 2024.
- OFW provided input to the draft Proposals Paper for Introducing Mandatory Guardrails for AI in High-Risk Settings which the Government released for public consultation from 5 September to 4 October 2024.
    - The Proposals Paper acknowledges AI outputs can create risks of harms to women, including discriminatory decisions against women and by perpetuating gender bias and stereotypes.
    - OFW promoted the consultation to the Women's Alliances.
    - As part of the public consultation, OFW co-chaired a gender impacts roundtable with DISR, held virtually on 2 October 2024.
    - Government is now considering the feedback and next steps.
    - OFW will continue to engage with DISR as the Government develops its regulatory response to AI in high-risk settings.
- On 12 November 2024, OFW convened a cross-departmental discussion on AI and workforce impacts, including gendered workforce impacts.
- OFW has also engaged with the following departments on AI initiatives:
    - The Digital Transformation Agency on the AI in Government Fundamentals training.
    - Jobs and Skills Australia on the scoping for its Generative AI Capacity Study.

[1] https://www.industry.gov.au/news/developing-national-ai-capability-plan

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Date: 24 March 2025
Cleared by (SES): Rochelle White
Branch/Section: Gender Based Violence and Social Policy
Contact Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation: PM&C (Industry section); DISR (Technology and Digital Division)

Future Made in Australia

Subject/Issue

The Government is taking action to increase women's participation in gender segregated industries and to share in the benefits of investments in Future Made in Australia with all Australians.

Key Points

- A future made in Australia relies on a strong, highly skilled workforce, but high rates of industry gender segregation mean we are not tapping into the full talent pool of our country.
- Women are underrepresented in the industries that will support Australia's net-zero transition.
- The Community Benefit Principles are the key mechanism for ensuring FMA projects promote safe and secure jobs and develop more skilled and inclusive workforces, including for women.
- Existing measures to increase women's participation in male-dominated industries and gain the skills needed for the future include:
    - **The Building Women's Careers program**; to increase women's participation in construction, clean energy, digital and technology and advanced manufacturing sectors.
    - **Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review and support measures**; which will enable more women to make the most of opportunities in growing industries, such as technology, renewable energy and quantum.
    - **Fee-Free TAFE** (subject to the passage of legislation)**;** to be established (with 100,000 places per year from 2027) as an enduring feature of the national VET system, with priority cohorts comprising women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, women facing economic insecurity and unpaid carers.
    - **Australian Skills Guarantee;** which came into effect on 1 July 2024, to help increase the number of women working on major Government-funded construction and ICT projects.
    - **Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries pilot program;** through a new **tripartite pilot grants program** open to peak employer organisations and state and territory Trades and Labour Councils.

Background

Building Women's Careers program (DEWR lead)

- The Government is investing **$60.6 million over four years from 2024-25** to establish the **Building Women's Careers (BWC) program** to drive structural and cultural change in training and work environments. Successful grant projects were announced in March 2025.
    - BWC will be targeted towards construction and key industries associated with FMA, including clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital and technology.
    - Government will work with industry, employers, women's services and training providers to ensure women have equitable access to work opportunities in the target industries, including opportunities created by FMA investment.
    - The BWC program will fund 10 large-scale projects and 10 smaller projects through a grants process.

Diversity in STEM measures (DISR lead)

- The 2024-25 Budget included **$38.2 million over 8 years from 2023-24** (and $1.3 million per year ongoing) in funding in response to the *Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review,* to scale up the Government's Women in STEM and science engagement programs, which will enable more women to make the most of opportunities in growing industries, such as technology, renewable energy and quantum.
- The Government is preparing a formal response to the Review recommendations, which will be released in due course.

FMA Community Benefit Principles (Tsy lead)

- The Government will establish Community Benefit Principles for decision makers to apply when designing policies or considering investment decisions that are designed to promote private investment at scale in industries aligned with the National Interest.
- These principles will have a focus on investment in local communities, supply chains and skills, and the **promotion of diverse workforces** and secure jobs.
- They will be applied in ways that promote private investment that builds sustainable industries by broadening opportunity, investing in future workforce, and strengthening supporting supply chains, without limiting the competitiveness of emerging industries.

Fee-Free TAFE (DEWR lead)

- The Government has announced their intention to establish Fee-Free TAFE as an enduring feature of the vocational education and training (VET) system, by introducing a Free TAFE Act to Parliament.
- Legislation was introduced into the House of Representatives on 7 November 2024 and passed the House of Representatives on 5 February 2025.
- This will fund 100,000 free TAFE places a year from 2027, provided an agreement is in place with the states/territories.
- More than 568,400 Australians have enrolled in fee-free TAFE since January 2023, and 62 per cent of enrolments have been by women (354,000).

Skilling the Clean Energy Workforce (DEWR lead)

- This measure provides **$91.0 million over five years from 2023–24** (and $0.6 million over three years from 2028–29) to support the development of the clean energy workforce by preparing vocational education and training (VET) systems to train more apprentices in clean energy industries.
- Through this measure, Government will address critical vocational education and training sector trainer workforce shortages, and fund new and existing training facility upgrades across a range of clean energy occupations.
- The measure also includes better support for small and medium enterprises to access apprentices through Group Training Organisations.
- Skilling the Clean Energy Workforce will also include advocacy and promotion work for clean energy careers, targeting women, First Nations people, and school leavers, to raise the profile of clean energy careers and awareness of incentives available, including the **New Energy Apprenticeships Program (NEAP).**

Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System (DEWR lead)

- The Australian Government has released the final report for the *Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System - Skills for tomorrow: Shaping the future of Australian apprenticeships.*
- The report makes 34 recommendations to support high-quality apprenticeships and ensure the Incentives System is effective and responsive to the needs of the labour market, apprentices and government.

- As an initial response, the Government is making additional investment to:
    - Maintain the 2025 Priority List and extend current **Australian Apprentice Training Support** and **Priority Hiring Incentive payment** settings by six months until 31 December 2025;
    - Increase the **Living Away From Home Allowance** from 1 July 2025;
    - Increase the **Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support** payment from 1 July 2025; and
    - Introduce a new **Key Apprenticeship Program** with a Housing Construction Apprenticeship stream to help achieve Australia's housing commitments until 30 June 2029.
- The Government also introduced a new program on 1 January 2025 providing small and medium businesses with access to subsidised Group Training Organisation (GTO) fees for up to 400 apprentice places, **including a 20 per cent target for apprentice women**.
- These initial investments will respond to the most urgent recommendations of the Review, including ongoing cost-of-living pressures, while Government carefully considers longer-term reforms and consults further with stakeholders.

Pilot program to drive gender equality in Australian workplaces (DEWR lead)

- The Government is investing $16.4 million to support new ways to help make workplaces safer, more respectful and more equitable for women in traditionally male-dominated sectors, through a new **tripartite pilot grants program**.
- The pilot program will identify actions that deliver tangible outcomes in gender segregated industries, especially in relation to safe and dignified amenities, flexible work and inclusive workplace cultures.
- The program will launch in 2025 for peak employer organisations and state and territory Trades and Labour Councils. Grant applications closed on 6 February 2025.
    - These organisations were chosen as they are uniquely placed to understand the challenges and barriers experienced within particular industries, and to work with employers and industry to deliver fit-for-purpose customised solutions.

Background

- A future made in Australia requires a highly skilled and diverse workforce.
- Reducing workforce gender segregation is integral to addressing and preventing skills shortages in high-growth industries.
- Increasing women's participation in currently male-dominated industries can help address skill shortages by supporting increased labour mobility and expanding the talent pool for businesses to draw on.
- Currently women are under-represented in industries that will support Australia's net-zero transition. Within the clean energy industry, women make up 35 per cent of the workforce.
- Reducing gender segregation in these industries requires more women and girls in STEM fields.
    - In 2021, women made up only 37 per cent of enrolments in university STEM courses and 17 per cent of vocational education and training STEM enrolments. In the same year, women represented only 15 per cent of Australia's STEM workforce.
    - In 2022, women made up only 6 per cent of solar installers, 8 per cent of energy efficiency engineers and 4 per cent of wind turbine technicians.

Date:	17/02/2025
Cleared by (SES):	Angela Hope
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy/Office for Women
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	PMC Shadows: Industry; Skills and Education; FMA; Clean Energy

Gender Parity Accelerator

Subject/Issue

The Government has announced that it will establish a Gender Parity Accelerator (Accelerator) in Australia, in partnership with World Economic Forum (WEF), Chief Executive Women (CEW) and the Champions of Change Coalition (CCC).

Key Points

- On 16 October 2024, the Minister for Women, the Hon Katy Gallagher, announced that Australia would establish a Gender Parity Accelerator - a new partnership between the Government, the private sector and the WEF, supported by CEW and the CCC.

- Preliminary work is underway to understand the current landscape in Australia. Part of the Accelerator model is to complete a systems analysis of current and emerging pay haps and identify opportunities for the Accelerator.

- We are also working closely with Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) to understand the scope of their Gender Economic Equality Study and ensure the Accelerator is complementary to this. The JSA study scope is still being refined.

- The Accelerator will convene a network of committed leaders from across Australia's largest companies to work together to accelerate meaningful progress towards gender equality.

- This partnership is a unique opportunity for the Government and corporate Australia to join forces and collaborate on innovative and practical strategies to support and empower women in the workplace and the broader economy.

- The partnership will be modelled on the WEF's successful Accelerator product and will help drive progress against Working for Women (the government's strategy for gender equality). It will focus on closing the gender pay gap, workplace flexibility and gender segregated industries.

- The Minister for Women will chair the Accelerator, alongside private sector co-chairs.

- The government is working towards confirming a date in collaboration with WEF, CEW and CCC.

If asked: what funding has been committed to the Accelerator?

- No Government funding has been provided to establish the Accelerator. It is being delivered within existing resources.

If asked: why is the Government partnering with WEF?

- The World Economic Forum has a tested model for accelerating progress on gender equality through public private partnership.
- The Australian Accelerator will build upon this successful model, drawing on the experience and resources of the World Economic Forum which has already implemented Accelerators in 14 economies worldwide.
- By partnering with the Forum, Australia will also be part of the Forum's Accelerator Global Learning Network, giving us access to valuable international perspectives as well as sharing what we do well here in Australia.

If asked: how is this different to existing work underway?

- This partnership is a unique opportunity for the Government and corporate Australia to join forces and collaborate on innovative and practical strategies to support and empower women in the workplace and the broader economy.
- There has been significant work undertaken by some businesses, advocates like CEW and CCC, and through WGEA to marshal leadership. However, until now, there has not been a shared table at which government and industries can examine the levers we each hold and work together to align our effort and maximise the impact of that effort.
- The Accelerator will bring this together, with *Working for Women* as a road map to ensure we can focus efforts to accelerate progress.

If asked: what is OFW's role?

- OFW will act as the central liaison point between the Government and other key stakeholders.

- OFW is working closely with WEF, CEW and CCC to ensure the Accelerator is delivered in alignment with *Working for Women*.

If asked: why was CEW selected to coordinate the Accelerator?

- CEW hold strong relationships across Australia's private sector. Their business models are built on maintaining relationships with Australia's most influential private sector actors to drive progress for gender equality, ensuring they are uniquely placed to promote and progress the Accelerator.

Background

- The Accelerator delivers on the Government's commitment to work with ASX companies to boost the representation of women in leadership roles and to support work the close the gender pay gap.

Date:	12 February 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Angela Hope
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy Branch, Industry and Skills
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Nil

Women in Honours and Leadership

Subject/Issue

The Government is committed to driving progress on women's leadership, representation and decision-making across all areas and levels (in line with priority 5 of Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality *(Working for Women*).

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on work being led by the Governor-General to increase diversity (beyond gender) in the Order of Australia to the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General.
- Refer questions on the review into Public Sector Board Appointment Processes to the Australian Public Service Commission.

OFW Role

- The Office for Women (OFW) leads gender balance on Australian Government boards reporting including collection and analysis of data and producing annual reports.
- OFW provides guidance to departments on the process and scope of gender balance on Government boards reporting. WGEA provides policy and strategy guidance to departments on gender balance on boards and governing bodies.
- The OFW undertakes gender analysis of the Order of Australia awards data provided by the OOSGG to better understand the underrepresentation of women in nominations and certain awards categories and the barriers to improving gender equality.
- The OFW, through the #NominateAWoman campaign, promotes representation of women in Order of Australia nominations and awards.

Key Points

Gender Balance on Government Boards

- This is the third year the target for women to hold at least 50 per cent of all Australian Government board positions has been met.
- The 2023-24 report released on 23 January 2025 shows women holding 54.4 per cent of board positions (against a target of 50 per cent).
- Women held 40 per cent of Australian Government Board positions on 78.4 per cent of individual boards. Meaning that 21.6 per cent of individual boards did not meet the target.
- Through *Working for Women*, the Government is implementing new targets to continue to improve women's representation on Australian Government boards from 2024-25.
- Baseline data was included in the 2023-24 report for these new targets

  - Women to hold 50% of Australian Government board positions at the portfolio level, which 11 of 17 portfolios met or exceeded in 2023-24.
  - Women to hold 50% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions on Australian Government board positions at the portfolio level, which 7 of 17 portfolios met or exceeded in 2023-24.

- It took five years to achieve the first target of 50% representation of women on Government boards in 2021-22). This shows that increasing women's representation can take time.
- To achieve gender equality, more work is needed to ensure women from diverse backgrounds are also represented in visible and influential decision-making roles in all sectors and leadership levels to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Women's representation as Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)

- When compared to the private sector, the Government continues to lead the way in gender equal leadership, setting an example for the private sector on what is possible when we commit to targets, and take steps to achieve gender parity.
- The recent Chief Executive Women Census reported that progress towards gender equality has stalled, noting that achieving gender parity in CEO roles could take another 54 years and in Executive Leadership teams another 16 years[1]. The census data reported that:
  - Fewer women were CEOs in the ASX300.
  - There was a decrease in women being appointed CEOs to ASX300 companies.
  - There was an increase in companies with no women in CEO pipeline roles.
  - There is an average 1% per year increase in women's progress in corporate leadership.
  - 91% of ASX300 CEOs are still held by men.
  - 8 of 10 CEO pipeline roles are still held by men.

Women in the Order of Australia

- OFW is supporting work to ensure women are recognised equally through the Australian honours system, through promoting the nomination of women through a social media campaign and analysing awards data (after they are determined by the Governor-General).

[1] Data has been published on SENIOR EXECUTIVE CENSUS 2024 (hubspotusercontent-na1.net)

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - WOMEN IN HONOURS AND LEADERSHIP
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- There has been a decrease in representation of women in the Australia Day Honours Awards this year, with women only receiving 46.8 per cent of awards across all award categories in the Order of Australia.
    - In previous years, the Order of Australia General Division achieved gender balance overall in three consecutive awards - 2023 King's Birthday Honours, 2024 Australia Day Awards and the 2024 King's Birthday Honours List.
- In the 2025 Australia Day Awards, women and men each received 50 per cent of the highest award, (AC – Companion of the Order). This is the second consecutive year where women have received 50 per cent or higher of these awards. This is a good achievement given women have been historically less represented in higher level honours compared to lower level awards.
- The representation of women (across the two Awards) improved each year from 2016 until 2024 (noting data for 2025 isn't available until the King's Birthday Awards in June 2025), largely through community advocacy, the work of the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (OOSGG), OFW and state-based programs (WA and Victoria), from 31 per cent in 2016 to 50.2 per cent in 2024.

#NominateAWoman Campaign

- OFW is encouraging the public to nominate more women for an Order of Australia award through the *#NominateAWoman* social media campaign, which seeks to increase nominations for women for the Order of Australia, particularly in areas where women are underrepresented.
- OFW consults with the Honours and Symbols team within PM&C, as well as the OOSGG to deliver the campaign within existing resources, using Australian Government and PM&C communications channels (PM&C Twitter/X, PM&C Facebook and LinkedIn, Australian Government Facebook and LinkedIn).
- On 22 August 2024, OFW launched the second #NominateAWoman animation to encourage the public to nominate more women for an Order of Australia award, with a focus on the aviation industry. This follows OFW analysis finding that women received only 5 per cent of awards for services in aviation between 2020 and 2024.
    - The campaign reached 120,000 people and was viewed 29,000 times. The number of views increased from the previous year's campaign, and decreased in reach, which can be attributed to the OFW Twitter being decommissioned.

  - The animation was shared at the Women in Aviation/Aerospace Australia's summit on 27 August 2024 to boost engagement. It has also been shared on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts - Women in the Aviation Industry website and social media channels.

- The first animation of the campaign was launched in August 2023, encouraging nominations for women, highlighting women's underrepresentation in awards for services to sport. The campaign reached 550,385 people and was viewed 21,000 times. Women received 37 per cent of awards for services to sport between 2020 and 2023.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - WOMEN IN HONOURS AND LEADERSHIP
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

Background

Gender balance on Australian Government boards

- Targets have been in effect since 2016. (refer to Appendix A of the report).
- It took five years to achieve the first target which shows increasing women's representation takes time.
- The Government is expanding the methodology of gender balance on Australian Government boards reporting so that all positions are captured (including ex-officio positions) for the 2024-25 annual report.
    - The previous methodology only captured positions that were appointed or approved by an Australian Government representative (the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, a Commonwealth Minister or the Governor-General in Council).
- OFW is implementing annual data collection, as well as the expanded methodology, including developing new guidance material, and supporting agencies through the transition to the new reporting.
    - These results will now be reported annually, as agreed to by the Minister for Women, to reduce reporting burden on Government departments.
- During the 2022 Federal Election, the Government committed to maintaining the target of 50 per cent representation of women on Australian Government Boards. This commitment also included:
    - further consideration of new targets for Chair and Deputy Chair positions;
    - boosting board representation in portfolios that are lagging in gender diversity; and
    - addressing under-representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in board positions.
- In 2009, the Australian Government committed to a gender diversity target of women holding 40 per cent of government board positions.
- Following the achievement of the 40 per cent target, the Australian Government committed to an increased gender diversity target of women holding 50 per cent of Government board positions overall from 1 July 2016.
- At this time, the Government also introduced a new target for women and men to each hold at least 40 per cent of positions at the individual board level (gender balanced boards).

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - WOMEN IN HONOURS AND LEADERSHIP
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

APSC Review into Public Sector Board Appointments Processes

- OFW has engaged with the APSC on the Review into Public Sector Board Appointments Processes. The Review includes a focus on improving the diversity of board membership (including in terms of gender, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and First Nations).
- Ms Lynelle Briggs AO conducted a review into public sector board appointment processes. It commenced in February 2023.
    - OFW participated in the Review and met with Ms Briggs and the Review Secretariat in January 2023.
    - This review has not yet been published.
    - *OFW participated in the review and met Ms Briggs and the review secretariat in January 2023. OFW provided advice on our data collection, monitoring and reporting process for women on government boards. Increasing broader diversity and representation on boards was discussed.*
    - *The work is complementary to work we are undertaking but much broader in scope.*

Questions on the Review should be referred to the APSC.

Women in the Order of Australia

- The Government's 2022 election commitment of 'Recognising Women's Contributions' includes the commitment to ensure the honours system reflects the contributions and achievements of Australian women.
- The Order is administered by the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (OOSGG) Secretariat, and is governed by the Constitution of the Order of Australia.
- OFW has undertaken analysis of data held by OOSGG which is not publicly available. The analysis aligns with Shelley Reys AO, Chair of the Council for the Order of Australia's statement that the key contributor to this under representation is the lack of nominations for women.[2]
    - OFW conducts an analysis of the Order of Australia awards (General Division) by gender and the proportion of men and women represented in the awards for services to particular industries.

[2] Shelley Reys AO - "Let's ensure The Order of Australia represents us all" | Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - WOMEN IN HONOURS AND LEADERSHIP
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2025

- The Order relies on community nominations; anyone can nominate at any time of the year.

Questions on work to increase diversity (beyond gender) in the Order of Australia should be addressed to the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General.

Date:	24 March 2025
Cleared by (SES):	Angela Hope
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	Australian Public Service Commission, PM&C Honours & Symbols

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WGEA Review
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2012 REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION

Subject

The Government is implementing the recommendations of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Act) Review (Review).

OFW Role

- The Office for Women (OFW) is working in collaboration with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) to implement the remaining legislative recommendations of the Review.
- The current focus of work is implementing Recommendation 3.1a to legislate the gender equality targets scheme.

Key points

Gender Equality Targets Scheme

- The Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill 2024 was introduced into the House on 20 November 2024 and the Senate on 10 February 2025.
- The Bill introduced a gender equality targets setting scheme for private and Commonwealth sector employers with 500 or more employees (designated relevant employers).
- The Bill requires designated relevant employers to set, and commit to achieve, gender equality targets in a three-year period. This is in addition to their existing requirements under the Act.
- The rules for the selection of targets from a 'menu of targets' will be included in delegated legislation, subject to the passage of the Bill.
- Consistent with the current operation, if a relevant employer fails to comply with the Act, WGEA may publicly name them as being non-compliant.

Gender Equality Targets and Procurement

- Employers who fail to achieve or improve against their targets will not be compliant with the WGEA Act.
- The link between the WGEA Act and procurement is through the Workplace Gender Equality Procurement Principles, which have been in place since 2013.
- Compliance with the WGEA Act is a requirement of the WGE Principles for procurement above $80,000, or $7.5 million for construction services

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WGEA Review
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

- The rules state 'where the principles apply, employers **must supply** a letter of compliance with their tender submission or prior to contracting with the government. These letters are issued by WGEA'.
- Meeting the principles is **mandatory but there are exceptions apart** in certain circumstances. These include to protect human health (vaccines), the maintenance of international peace and security, protection of essential security interests or to protect national treasures or artistic, historical or archaeological value (CPR section 2.6).
- Each agency is responsible for their compliance with the principles and they are the decision-makers on what constitutes significant non-compliance with the CPRs.
- If an employer becomes non-compliant with the WGE Act during the term of a contract, they are obliged to notify the nominated Department procurement contact.
- The principles form part of the Australian Government's procurement connected policy. These are governed by the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, which form part of finance law as defined by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) which is managed by the Department of Finance.

Compliance with WGEA procurement principles

- The OFW recently assessed compliance with the principles - finding a high level of compliance across government across two reporting periods.
- On 7 February 2025 WGEA published a list of 250 employers named as non-compliant with the Act for the 2023-24 reporting period.
- Of the named non-compliant employers, 7 employers were contracted by Commonwealth agencies from 31 May 2024 to Feb 2025:
    - The Commonwealth entered into 23 contracts with these 8 employers worth a total value of $30.8 million.
    - This represents a 0.007 per cent of the total value of Government contracts ($452.7 billion).
    - These contracts included categories of security and safety equipment and defence and law enforcement.

s 47E(d)

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WGEA Review
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Consultation on Procurement Principles

- OFW conducted a public consultation on the WGE Procurement Principles in August 2023. This was in response to Recommendation 8 of the Review to strengthen compliance and enforcement of the WGE Act and principles.
- The consultation closed in September 2023. Five submissions were received, including two government submissions (Australian Signals Directorate and the Department of Defence) and three external submissions (Global Institute for Women's Leadership, Ai Group and Chief Executive Women).
- Submissions suggested: that discretion be more explicitly referenced in the principles; a more efficient mechanism to confirm compliance for the employer; increased transparency of ongoing compliance across the life of the procurement.

Commitment to further compliance action

- The Australian Government has committed to improve transparency through annual reporting on compliance with the principles and procurement outcomes. OFW will also engage with agencies that have non-compliant contractors within their portfolios, to support strengthening compliance where possible.
- The Office for Women reviewed the effectiveness of the principles and will refine them in 2025.
-

Target setting amendments and responses

Greens amendment: Require all employers to select the equal remuneration target in addition to 3 other targets

- The targets scheme allows flexibility so employers can choose what is right for them. The scheme was designed to address the gender pay gap directly and indirectly through the mix of targets.
- The rules under the designated legislation will require employers to select at least one numeric target, which will indirectly support the closing of the gender pay gap. For example, if an employer chooses the numeric target that works towards improving the gender composition of the workforce, this would likely have a positive flow on impact on closing the gender pay gap.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WGEA Review
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

- In 2022, a KPMG report found the largest contributors to the gender pay gap are: gender discrimination (36 per cent); care, family and workforce participation (33 per cent); type of job (24 per cent).

Greens amendment: Expand scheme to include employers with 100 or more employees (down from 500 or more employees)

- The Bill was drafted to strike the balance between achieving gender equality outcomes through target setting and minimising regulatory burden, particularly for smaller employers.
- While employers with 500 or more employees make up 25% of all Australian employers (1,950 employers), these cover 75% or 3.9 million employees that fall under WGEA's reporting framework.
- The focus is to implement a targets scheme that will work for larger employers now to begin to drive action on workplace gender equality.
- Setting and making efforts towards achieving targets requires resources. Employers with 500 or more employers are already required to have policies and strategies in place against the six Gender Equality Indicators (Indicators).
- Employers with 100-499 employees do not have these requirements.

Greens amendment: Require that the Commonwealth must not procure with employers that do not have a WGEA certificate of compliance

- The Workplace Gender Equality Procurement Principles already have the same effect as the proposed amendments – that is for WGEA to issue a certificate of compliance when the employer is compliant.
- The current Workplace Gender Equality Procurement Principles are governed by the Commonwealth Procurement rules, which form part of finance law under the PGPA Act. It would not be appropriate to amend this Bill to affect changes to procurement arrangements.

Senator Thorpe amendment: At the end of the second reading, move a motion that the Senate notes the need for intersectional data analysis and in developing targets and calls on the Government to ensure employers report intersectional and diversity data (First Nations, CALD, LGBTIQIA+, disability) to WGEA

- The collection of diversity and non-binary gender data were recommendations from the 2021 Review of the Workplace Gender Equality Act (recommendation 6 and 7.2). Refer to answer below.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WGEA Review
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Remaining Review Recommendations

- Recommendation 1.1: Identify how to improve the quality of data reported to WGEA and reduce the regulatory burden for employers through the Gender Data Steering Group (GDSG).

    - The GDSG has met seven times since established on 12 October 2022 and met on the 9 December 2024. It has developed a stocktake of government data holdings and opportunities to address gender data gaps. Implementing this recommendation would require the linkage of WGEA data to government data.

- Recommendation 6: Research how to collect more diversity data and
  Recommendation 7.2: Enable WGEA to collect data on non-binary people and
  Recommendation 7.3b: Identify the best approach to comprehensively include partnerships and partners in the WGEA dataset.
    - OFW is working with WGEA to understand the utility of the data, the privacy implications, due to disclosure risks associated with the number of data items.
    - OFW is also looking at the different options that might be available to gain diversity data on the gender pay gap. This includes working with Jobs and Skills Australia who released a consultation paper on their new gender economic equality study on 18 February that closes on 7 March.

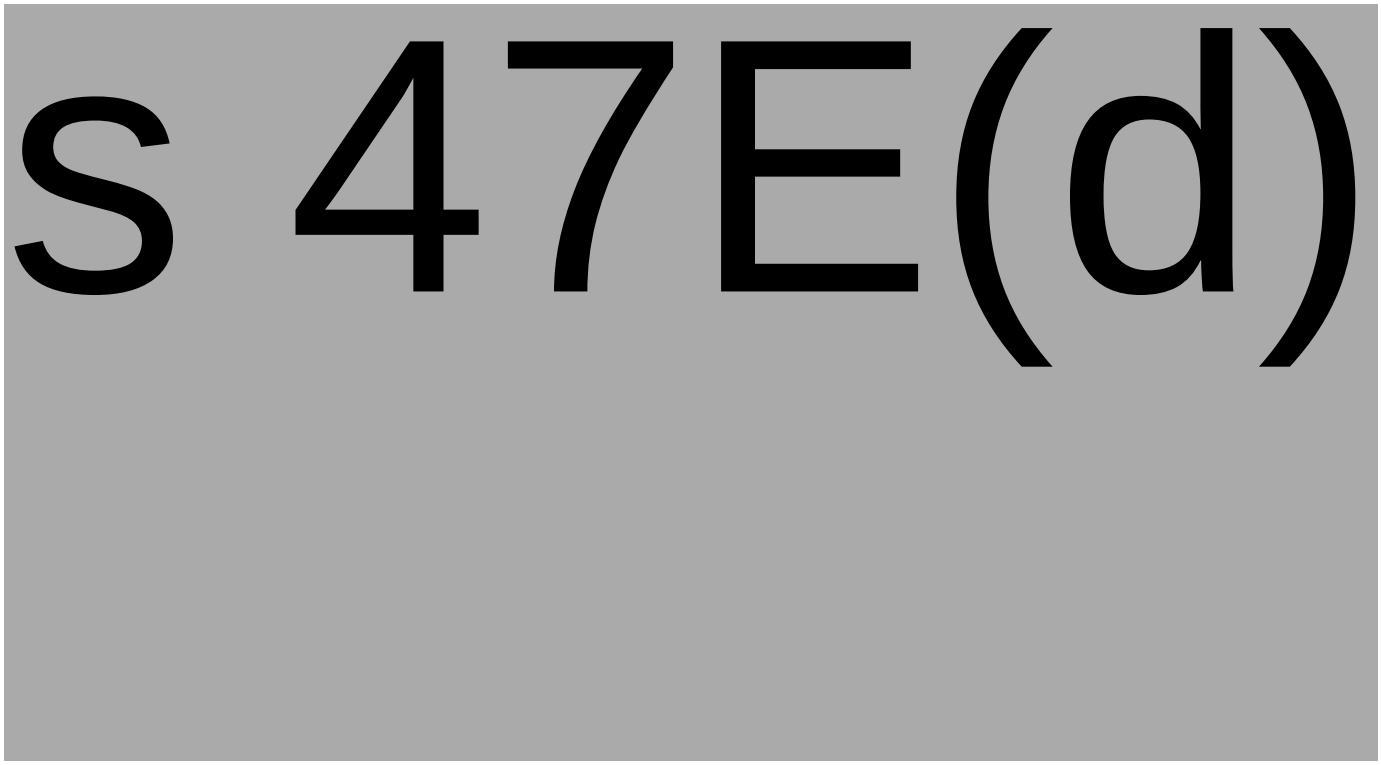
OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WGEA Review
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Background

First Tranche of Legislation

- Six of the 10 recommendations of the Review were implemented, in part or full, through the *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Act 2023* (which received Royal Assent on 11 April 2023) and associated instruments.
    - The Workplace Gender Equality (Gender Equality Standards) Instrument 2023 and the Workplace Gender Equality (Matters in relation to Gender Equality Indicators) Instrument 2023 have been in force since 6 February 2023.

See HIB -Workplace Gender Equality Review Implementation for further detail on the first tranche of legislation and detailed status of all recommendations.



Gender Data Steering Group (GDSG)

- OFW established the GDSG (**recommendation 1.2**) in October 2022.
    - The group is co-chaired by Padma Raman, PM&C OFW Executive Director, and Brenton Goldsworthy, ABS Deputy Statistician.
    - This group has been convened to maximise the impact of the government's major data holdings as an evidence-base for gender equality policy.
    - The group has met on eight occasions since its establishment; on 12 October 2022, 16 November 2022, 16 March 2023, 6 July 2023

and 21 September 2023, 21 November 2023, 25 March 2024 and 9 December 2024.
    - The group has discussed its role in improving the impact of the Government's collection and use of gender data, findings from a stocktake of major Government data holdings, opportunities to address gender data gaps, and uplift gender data capability.

Public Sector Reporting

- The A*nti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation (Respect@Work) Act 2022* received Royal Assent on 12 December 2022 and amended the Act to require Commonwealth public sector organisations with 100 or more employees to report to WGEA on gender equality indicators, implementing recommendation 43(a) of Respect@Work.
    - From 1 January 2023, the Commonwealth public sector began mandatory reporting to WGEA.
    - Results from the first Commonwealth public sector reporting period were published on 20 June 2024 and the employer level gender pay gaps will be published in early 2025.

State & Territory Public Sector Reporting

- On 10 December 2021, National Cabinet announced its in-principle agreement for all States and Territories to provide public sector workforce data to WGEA.
    - This commitment intends to align the reporting requirements of the state and territory public sectors with the Commonwealth Public Sector to enable greater data collection by WGEA.
    - This commitment is being monitored through the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (Council).

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF WGEA Review
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Key Facts and Figures

- The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of women and men in the workforce.
- The WGEA gender pay gap is **21.1 per cent** for the 2023-24 period and **21.8 per cent** when the remuneration of CEOs, Heads of Business and Casual Managers is included.
    - This calculation includes data from private sector organisations with 100 or more employees, and includes overtime, bonuses and additional payments and the salaries of part-time and casual workers.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) national gender pay gap is **11.9 per cent** based on ABS full time average weekly ordinary earnings data – this does not include over-time, bonuses for November 2024.
- The gender pay gap has widened from its lowest value on record of 11.5 per cent in May 2024. It was $12.0% a year ago.

s 47F

- Men's earnings surged more rapidly than women's during the 6-month period, particularly in sectors such as the real estate industry where jobs growth is strong.

- The women's workforce participation rate reached a record high of 63.5 per cent in January.

- Between May and November 2024, we also saw an expansion in women's employment in pre-school and school education sector. Because it's low paying it can dampen the calculation.

- The Government's pay rise to ECEC workers won't come in until December so won't be reflected in the next gender pay gap calculation.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - US RESEARCH GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Trump Administration questionnaire to Australian Universities

Subject / Issue

Australian universities have been issued with a questionnaire from the United States of America (US) Government seeking advice on US-funded research partnerships.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on university research to the Department of Education, and questions on Australia's foreign policy to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Key Points

- Some Australian universities have been issued with a questionnaire from the US Government seeking advice on US-funded research partnerships.
    - The Department of Education is aware of 11 universities that either received the questionnaire or have impacted research funding (for example, where Australian universities' research partners have had their funding terminated).
    - In 2024, around $515 million for research at Australian universities came from the US, predominantly for defence and medical science projects. Australian universities received $160 million from the US National Institutes of Health in the last financial year.
- There is ongoing work across Government to understand what these measures mean for current and future funding and collaboration.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - US RESEARCH GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Background

- US Government agencies and partners have written to some Australian universities requesting information on US-funded research partnerships (refer to Attachment A for questionnaire).
- Recipients were asked to complete a 36-point questionnaire by 17 March 2025, with the understanding that responses will be used by the US Government to "support Department and Agency program determinations".
    - The questionnaire included 36 questions with themes covering research links to China; diversity, equity and inclusion; ending government waste; terrorism; supporting US border controls; preventing flow of opioids; and eradicating anti-Christian bias.
    - The questionnaire asks about a range of issues relevant to the President Trump's 'America First' policy, and their intersection with the particular project and university.
- This action is pursuant to Executive Order 14169 – Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid, and is part of the US Government's broader review of partnership arrangements.

Attachments

Attachment A: US Questionnaire to Australian Universities

Date:	24/03/2025
Cleared by (SES):	Hester Green
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy/Office for Women
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	PMC Shadows: Workplace Relations and Small Business, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - US RESEARCH GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Attachment A – US Questionnaire to Australian Universities

OMB CONTROL NO. 1405-0264
EXPIRATION DATE: 08-31-2025
ESTIMATED BURDEN: 30 MINUTES

Attachment B
Outreach to Implementing Partners

Each Department and Agency should consult with their implementing partners, as appropriate, to answer the following questions and develop a score that should be inputted into the data request and is used to support Department and Agency program determinations. If questions are sent directly to the implementing partners, please include the OMB Control Number and other information in the header of this attachment, and the Paperwork Reduction Act Statement at the bottom of this attachment.

Department and Agencies should submit summary data reflecting their outreach to implementing partners to FAR@state.gov and MBX.OMB.FARDataCall@omb.eop.gov in a data searchable file, no later than March 17, 2025.

For questions 1-24, If the partner answers Yes, the question should receive 5 points and 0 for no.
For Questions 25-36, please record 1-5 points based on the answer, with one being the lowest and five the highest. The highest possible score is 180. If N/A this will be listed as no points. The score or average of all implementing partners should be entered into the data base for each program account.

[Insert Name of Implementing Partner/Program].

1. Does your organization have a current risk management framework or policy? [yes/no]
   - If yes, please describe the framework or policy.
2. Can you confirm that your agency has not collaborated with, had any accusations or investigations of working with an entity on the terrorism watch list, cartels, narco/human traffickers, organized or groups that promote mass migration in the last ten years? [yes/no]
   - If no, what was the incident and the remediation?
3. Does your organization conduct regular counterterrorism vetting of its employees, sub-awardees, etc.? [yes/no]
   - If yes, please describe how.
   - If not, please explain why not.
   - Designating Cartels And Other Organizations As Foreign Terrorist Organizations And Specially Designated Global Terrorists
4. Does the project encourage partners to adopt policies and take action to respect their national sovereignty and culture, strengthen patriotic values, and reduce dependence on external institutions? [yes/no]
   - Explain.
5. Does your organization encourage free speech and encourage open debate and free sharing of information? [yes/no]
   1. If yes, please describe.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - US RESEARCH GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

OMB CONTROL NO. 1405-0264
EXPIRATION DATE: 08-31-2025
ESTIMATED BURDEN: 30 MINUTES

6. Does your organization have a clear policy prohibiting any collaboration, funding, or support for entities that advocate or implement policies contrary to U.S. government interests, national security, and sovereignty? [yes/no]
   - If yes, please describe.
   - Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid

7. Is your organization compliant with the latest Mexico City Policy? [yes/no]
   - Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the United States for International Development

8. Does your organization have an approach to transitioning projects off foreign assistance [yes/no]
   - If yes, what is that approach?
   - What percentage of programs have transitioned in the last 10 years?

9. Does this project demonstrate clear cost-effectiveness and take active measures to mitigate waste, fraud, and abuse? [yes/no]
   - Explain.
   - What is the project's overhead costs (indirect costs associated with managing and operating the project) in an approximate percentage?

10. Does your organization have an anti-trafficking policy? [yes/no]
    - A National Emergency At The Southern Border Of The United States

11. Can you confirm that your organization does not work with entities associated with communist, socialist, or totalitarian parties, or any party that espouses anti-American beliefs? [yes/no]

12. Does this project reinforce U.S. sovereignty by limiting reliance on international organizations or global governance structures (e.g., UN, WHO)? [yes/no]

13. Can you confirm that your organization has not received ANY funding from the PRC (including Confucius Institutes and/or partnered with Chinese state or non-state actors), Russia, Cuba, or Iran? [yes /no]
    - If your organization has received funding from these entities, please describe.
    - How does the organization track the parent company of potential funding sources to ensure no funding come from these entities?

14. Does this project directly contribute to limiting illegal immigration or strengthening U.S. border security? [yes /no]
    1. If yes, please describe.

15. Can you confirm that this is no DEI project or DEI elements of the project? [yes /no]
    - Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing

16. Can you confirm this is not a climate or "environmental justice" project or include such elements? [yes/no]

OMB CONTROL NO. 1405-0264
EXPIRATION DATE: 08-31-2025
ESTIMATED BURDEN: 30 MINUTES

- Putting America First In International Environmental Agreements – The White House

17. Does this project support U.S. energy independence or reduce global reliance on hostile countries for energy resources? [yes/no]

18. Does this project support lifesaving assistance? [yes/no]

19. Does this project take appropriate measures to protect women and to defend against gender ideology as defined in the below Executive Order? [yes/no]

    - Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government

20. Does this project take appropriate measures to protect children? [yes/no]

    - Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government

21. Does this project have burden sharing, cost sharing, or private investments? [yes/no]

22. Does this project create measurable benefits for U.S. domestic industries, workforce, or economic sectors? [yes/no]. If yes, please provide a short summary.

23. Does this project have a sustainability plan to ultimately transition away from foreign assistance within the next five years? [yes/no]. If yes, please provide a short summary.

24. Does this project fulfill a national security need that cannot be fulfilled without this entity? [yes/no] If yes, please provide a short summary of this national security need. Responses can be provided to the RMO point of contact at a higher classification, if required.

For questions below, if not applicable, list N/A. Use the following criteria to formulate your response:

1 – No Impact: The project does not contribute to the objective in any way.

2 – Minor Impact: The project has limited or indirect effect with minimal influence on achieving the objective.

3 – Neutral: The project's impact is conditional or relies on external factors or contingencies to have an effect.

4 – Moderate Impact: The project has a noticeable and positive influence on the objective, though not immediately significant or widespread.

5 – Major Impact: This has a direct, meaningful, and immediate effect, significantly advancing the objective.

0 – Not applicable, and would receive a score of zero.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - US RESEARCH GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

OMB CONTROL NO. 1405-0264
EXPIRATION DATE: 08-31-2025
ESTIMATED BURDEN: 30 MINUTES

25. How much does this project directly impact efforts to counter malign influence, including China? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 - Not applicable)

- America First Trade Policy

26. What impact does this project have on preventing illegal immigration to the U.S.? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

- Securing Our Borders

27. What impact does this project have on limiting the flow of fentanyl, synthetic drugs, and pre-cursor chemicals into the U.S.? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

- Imposing Duties to Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across our Northern Borders

28. To what degree does this project directly impact U.S. health security, such as biological threats, pandemics, and foreign dependence on medical supplies? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

29. To what extent does this project strengthen partner and ally security assistance by contributing to securing U.S. borders, protecting American sovereignty, and upholding national security? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

30. Does this project directly impact transnational, organized and/or cybercrime, and drug and human trafficking to protect American lives and national security? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

- Protecting The United States From Foreign Terrorists And Other National Security And Public Safety Threats
- Designating Cartels And Other Organizations As Foreign Terrorist Organizations And Specially Designated Global Terrorists – The White House

31. What impact does this project have on protecting religious minorities, promoting religious freedom, and combatting Christian prosecution? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

1. Establishment of The White House Faith Office
2. Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias

OMB CONTROL NO. 1405-0264
EXPIRATION DATE: 08-31-2025
ESTIMATED BURDEN: 30 MINUTES

32. What impact does this project have in increasing American influence, trust and reputation within foreign governments? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

33. What impact does this project have in increasing American influence, trust and reputation among foreign publics? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not applicable)

34. What is the specific financial return of this project, including measurable dividends, cost benefit analysis, and economic impact? (1 – 0, 2 – under 500,000, 3 – 500,000-999,999, 4 – 1M-1.5M, 5 – over 1.5M)

- America First Trade Policy

35. How much does this project bring in through cost-sharing / burden sharing? (1 – less than 500,000, 2 – 500,000-750,000, 3 – 750,001-999,999, 4 – 1M-1.5M, 5 – over 1.5M)

36. Does this project directly impact efforts to strengthen U.S. supply chains or secure rare earth minerals? (1 – No Impact, 2 – Minor Impact, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Moderate Impact, 5 – Major Impact, 0 – Not Applicable)

- National Energy Emergency

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time required for searching existing data sources, gathering the necessary data, providing the information and/or documents required, and reviewing the final collection. You do not have to supply this information unless this collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - CFMEU, GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

CFMEU allegations and Building Women's Careers

Subject / Issue

CFMEU allegations of corruption and gender based violence and the Building Women's Careers (BWC) grant provided to Incolink.

Handling Advice

- Refer questions on the CFMEU allegations to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and criminal allegations to the Australian Federal Police.
- Refer questions on BWC to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
- For further information on actions to improve the safety of women in Australian workplaces, refer to back pocket briefs on **Women's Safety** and **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**.

Key Points

- The influence of organised crime in the construction industry, including the CFMEU, is a serious issue. The Government is committed to ensuring women are safe in all workplaces.
    - It would be inappropriate for the Office for Women (OFW) to comment on ongoing investigations into the CFMEU.
- Incolink is one of the recipients of grant funding under the BWC grant program, with CFMEU one of 17 partners working together to deliver this project.
    - DEWR has advised that the **CFMEU will receive no government funding** through this grant.
- Incolink's 'Women in Construction' project seeks structural change to support better careers for women in construction. A broad partnership is required to achieve this change, and partnering with organisations such as OurWatch (one of the 17 partners), as well as workplaces with demonstrated issues, presents an opportunity to understand drivers of issues and ensure steps towards systematic improvements.
- Funding will be used for worksite cultural change interventions to address systemic, cultural barriers such as discrimination, harassment and gendered violence in construction. It will provide supported placement of women in skilled, well-paid construction roles, and wraparound supports for individual women in areas such as mental health, financial planning, family care and workplace safety.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - CFMEU, GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

What has OFW's involvement been in the Building Women's Careers program and selection of Incolink?

- OFW was consulted on the design of the BWC program, as is the case for a range of programs across Government that aim to positively impact women.
- OFW volunteered two staff to participate in the selection panel of BWC grants as subject matter experts on supporting gender equality.
- OFW's participation on the panel was to bring additional expertise in gender equality policy, as well as knowledge of previous grant recipients and gender equality organisations proposed in the partnerships who could help support long term structural change.
- Decisions on the program are otherwise a decision for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Will Incolink have its grant revoked based on CFMEU allegations?

- Questions on the grant program should be directed to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Is OFW aware of any specific action in the construction industry to address workplace culture and gendered based violence?

- The Government is committed to creating safer, respectful and more equitable workplaces for women.
- In addition to BWC, there are a number of initiatives underway across the Government to address safe workplaces that go beyond the construction industry (see back pocket briefs on Women's Safety and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace).
- Specific to the CFMEU allegations, a range of non-legislative responses regarding the Construction and General Division and other challenges in the construction industry have been put in place, such as the development of a Building and Construction Industry Blueprint by the tripartite National Construction Industry Forum (NCIF).
    - The blueprint is still in development and detailed questions should be directed to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - CFMEU, GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Background

CFMEU Allegations

- On 16 March, 60 Minutes aired new allegations about organised crime's influence in the construction sector, particularly Victoria's Big Build projects. Similar reports were published on 17 March 2025 by The Age/Sydney Morning Herald.
- *Allegations included that:*
    - Protection rackets on construction firms were being run by underworld figure Mick Gatto.
    - Outlaw Motorcycle Gang members and associates were being employed as ghost workers in CFMEU backed labour hire firms, being paid for jobs they rarely showed up for, and being given roles as Health and Safety Representatives and CFMEU workplace delegates.
    - Men committing violence against women on construction sites were being protected by the CFMEU and the women were being black listed and excluded from worksites.

Building Women's Careers – CFMEU grant partner

- The Australian Government is investing $60.6 million in the BWC Program to drive systemic structural and cultural change in training and work environments critical to a Future Made in Australia.
- One of the successful recipients under BWC is an organisation named Incolink, a joint union and employer entitlements fund.
    - The CFMEU is one of 17 partners working together to deliver this project. The partners include construction firms, employer groups, unions, Jesuit Social Services and **OurWatch**, which is one of Australia's leading organisations for primary prevention of gendered violence.
    - Funding is held by Incolink and the CFMEU will receive no government funding through this grant.
- The Women in Construction project seeks structural change to support better careers for women in construction. A broad partnership is required to achieve this change, and organisations such as OurWatch partnering with workplaces with demonstrated issues presents a unique opportunity to drive systematic change.
- There has been some media scrutiny on this issue and members of the Opposition have called for the Australian National Audit Office to investigate the

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF - CFMEU, GRANTS
BUDGET ESTIMATES MARCH 2025

Incolink grant, citing concerns about transparency and accountability, and also called for the grant to be revoked.

Differences between Building Women's Careers and Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries (DEWR Grants)

- The BWC and Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries grant programs have been designed to be complimentary and build on existing government work.
- The BWC program is a **four-year** grant program for partnership projects to address structural and cultural barriers to women's participation in Vocational Education and Training and employment specific to **construction, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital and technology industries.**
    - It is delivered with a partnership approach and is funded through two streams: an industry/sector led stream for grants up to $5 million and a community led stream for grants up to $1 million.
- The Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries program is a **one-year** program funding initiatives that will promote gender equality in gender segregated industries, occupations or workplaces, particularly male-dominated industries, to develop innovative solutions to create more gender equitable industries.
    - The grant opportunity was closed to state and territory **Trade and Labour Councils (TLCs) and peak employer organisations,** who are uniquely placed to understand the challenges and barriers to gender equality experienced within particular industries, and to work with employers and industry to deliver fit-for-purpose customised solutions.

Date:	25/03/2025
Cleared by (SES):	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy/Office for Women
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Consultation:	PMC Shadows: Workplace Relations and Small Business, Skills & Ed; DEWR

OFW FAS BACKPOCKET BRIEF **ASG**

Australian Skills Guarantee – ICT Targets

Subject/Issue

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening women's economic equality by supporting women's participation in education and training, including by setting targets for Women Learning Workers for major Government-funded ICT projects over $10 million under the Australian Skills Guarantee (ASG) Procurement Connected Policy (PCP).

Any detailed questions regarding the ASG ICT targets should be referred to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

OFW Role

- OFW provides policy advice on the gendered dimensions of the ASG, particularly around setting targets for Women Learning Workers (including apprentices, trainees and cadets).

Key Points

- Currently, the ASG PCP requires that targets for Major ICT Projects be negotiated on a project-by-project basis, based on workforce information provided by Potential Suppliers during the procurement process.
- The Government undertook public consultations on setting specific ICT Learning Worker targets from 18 November 2024 to 4 December 2024, including through public submissions and online roundtables.
- OFW were consulted during the development of the proposed targets.
- Detailed questions about the consultation process and proposed policy parameters should be referred to DEWR.
- The setting of specific targets will help to ensure the ASG is meeting its aim to help train the next generation of skilled workers and address future skills shortages and gender segregation in these male-dominated sectors. It will also provide clarity for Suppliers of Major ICT Projects by ensuring consistent targets are applied to all Major ICT Projects.

Background

- The ASG commenced on 1 July 2024 and aims to address ongoing skills shortages and gender segregation in the Construction and ICT sectors.
- The ASG PCP introduced new national targets for apprentices and trainees, ICT Cadets and Women working on major Australian Government-funded projects over the individual value of $10 million.
- Women are underrepresented in the ICT sector.
    - The ACS Australia's Digital Pulse 2023 report (prepared by Deloitte Access Economics and Australian Computer Society) found that women accounted for only 29% of the overall tech workforce in 2022.
    - This represents a decline in the proportion of women in that workforce for the first time in the nine editions this metric has been tracked, with increases between 2014 (28%) and 2021 (31%). Comparatively, women made up 44% of people employed in professional industries and 47% of Australia's total workforce.
    - As at 31 December 2023, women accounted for an estimated 9.9% of the total number of Apprentices in-training across ICT occupations.

Date:	24/02/2025
Cleared by (SES):	Angela Hope
Branch/Section:	Women's Economic Policy/Office for Women
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Telephone No:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)

GBV - Alcohol

National Cabinet

- At the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet meeting, Government's committed to actions to address the relationships between alcohol and FDSV at Commonwealth and State and Territory levels:
    - **Commonwealth investment** of $1.0 million over two years from 2025-26 to review and update the *National framework for action to prevent alcohol-related family violence* to address the role of alcohol and other drugs in exacerbating violence.
        - Funding for the review commences in July 2025. In preparation, the Department of Health and Aged Care is undertaking scoping work to enable the review to commence promptly.
    - **State and territory** First Ministers to review alcohol laws and their impact on FDV victims. This includes identifying and sharing best-practice and reforms, and reporting back to National Cabinet.
        - States and territories agreed they would work independently on their reviews and then report collectively through the Council for the Australian Federation (CAF) Secretariat back to First Deputies' Group. Coordination of these reviews is also being discussed through the Interjurisdictional Working Group (IWG) that reports to First Deputies' Group.
    - South Australia is undertaking their review and has concluded public consultations on the draft Liquor Licensing (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025. Currently, the draft amendments include:
        - Introducing a paramount objective of harm minimisation (with the previous objective to regulate and control the promotion, sale, supply and consumption of liquor becoming supplementary to the paramount objective).
        - Introducing provisions to implement two-hour safety pause for alcohol delivery, and a small reduction in alcohol delivery window from 8am-10pm to 10am-10pm.

Alcohol Excise

- Through the 2025-26 Budget, the Government will pause indexation on draught beer excise and excise-equivalent duty rates for a two-year period, from August 2025.

- The Government will also increase support available under the existing *Excise remission scheme for manufacturers of alcohol beverages* and Wine Equalisation Tax producer rebate.

- Consistent with the Australian Government's National Drug Strategy 2017-2026, excise is imposed on alcohol to help address the social and economic costs associated with excessive alcohol consumption.
  - Revenue from excise, including alcohol excise, goes to funding for essential services that benefit the whole community, such as health and education.
  - The Government continually monitors the adequacy of all tax settings, current settings balance a variety of policy objectives such as health, industry support, control of illicit goods, consumer choice, and collecting revenue for essential services.

Rapid Review

- The Rapid Review notes that the alcohol industry is well positioned to reduce harm, yet has not been proactive about addressing the impact that alcohol has on the rate and severity of violence and abuse against women and children.

Rapid Review recommendation	**Action**
17. The Commonwealth and state and territory governments to work with industries that are well positioned to prevent and reduce DFSV, including homicide, with a focus on alcohol and gambling industries, in addition to media and pornography. This includes reviewing and strengthening alcohol and gambling regulatory environments to prioritise the prevention of gender-based violence. This should include: a. adopting clear primary objectives in state and territory liquor regulatory regimes to prevent gender-based violence, alongside existing objectives around alcohol harm reduction (states and territories); b. restrictions on alcohol sales, delivery timeframes (states and territories) and advertising (Commonwealth and states and territories);	S/T First Ministers to review alcohol laws and their impact on FDV victims.
17. […]. Further, the Review recommends that the Commonwealth Government work with the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and other organisations on a framework to ensure the development of an integrated and focused effort to address the role of alcohol in DFSV.	Cth to review and update the *National framework for action to prevent alcohol-related family violence*.

ANROWS – Building evidence on perpetration

- 2024-25 Budget invested $4.3 million in 2024-25 to commission ANROWS to further build the evidence base on pathways into and out of FDSV perpetration.
- Scope of work for this funding includes two components:
    1. ANROWS undertaking a rapid **environmental scan** of research, evidence and data on pathways into and out of perpetration. This aimed to identify gaps and inform government and the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches (Rapid Review).
    2. ANROWS commissioning **further research** on perpetration to address the priority areas.

1. Environmental scan

- Environmental scan of perpetrator evidence base includes:
    - Mapping of perpetrator interventions and insights from research for pathways out of FDSV perpetration.
    - Information for government on where the gaps in the evidence base are, priorities and how these gaps could be filled.
- ANROWS, AIHW and AIFS attended the Rapid Review expert panel's meeting on 8 July 2024 to present on the environmental scan findings.
- The final environmental scan was delivered late-July 2024. s 47E(d)

s 47E(d)

s 47E(d)

2. Further research

- As part the above funding, ANROWS is investing $2 million into commissioning eight research projects aimed at understanding FDSV perpetration to inform policy and practice design for prevention and early intervention.
- The selected eight projects (with two being led by First Nations researchers) will delve into several key areas, including:
    - Investigating the demographic profiles of people who use domestic and family violence
    - Understanding the risk factors and pathways leading to and away from perpetration
    - Enhancing practitioner skills and confidence in perpetration response
    - Developing better-tailored responses for diverse population groups
    - Improving agency processes and data collection practices and fostering improved partnerships with potential funding bodies and new research partners.

s 47E(d)

Children's Measures

Subject

The government is committed to effective action to improve children's safety.

Handling Advice

- Related briefs:
  - Backpocket Brief on **First Nations Women and Children's Safety**
  - SB25-000079 Hot Issues Brief **Women's Safety**
  - SB25-000080 Hot Issues Brief **National Cabinet GBV**

Key points

- The Government has invested over $4.0 billion under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan) since the October 2022-23 Budget *(SB25-000079 Overview – Women's Safety* refers).
  - On 16 August 2023, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments launched a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025 under the National Plan (*First Nations Women and Children's Safety BPB* refers).
  - The Office for Women is working closely with DSS on the development of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices. OFW has been consulted on early drafts.
- The National Plan is just one of a number of Commonwealth strategies and frameworks that work together to improve outcomes for children and young people. Other national strategies include:
  - The *Early Years Strategy 2024-34*
  - *Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031* (Safe and Supported)
  - The *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse* 2021-2030.
- As part of the package agreed by National Cabinet on 6 September 2024 (*SB25-000080 National Cabinet GBV* refers) the Government invested **$534.5 million over six years** towards a number of ending gender-based violence measures through 2024-25 MYEFO. This included:
  - $366.9 million over five years from 2025–26 to extend the **National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses**. This funding will support frontline service delivery, with a **focus on specialist services for women and children and working with men**. The agreement will include matched funding from states and territories and deliver over $700 million across governments.
  - $81.3 million over six years from 2024–25 to enhance and expand **child centric trauma informed supports** for children and young people to help break the cycle of violence. This will include specific focus on First Nations children and young people through culturally safe consultation and expertise. The package includes:
    - **1.0 million over two years from 2024–25 for a comprehensive consultation process** to inform the design and implementation of new and revised initiatives to support children and young people, including a specific focus on First Nations children and young people;
    - **40.6 million over six years from 2024–25 (and $10.7 million per year ongoing from 2030–31) expansion of components of the Specialised Family Violence Service (SFVS)** to bolster child-centric and culturally safe services;

    - **$12.8 million over five years from 2024–25 for a targeted grants program** for specialist and community support services, including ACCOs and rural and regional services, to expand social, therapeutic, legal and other support services provided to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and children at risk of or engaging in harmful sexual behaviour;
    - **$20.1 million over six years from 2024–25 (and $5.6 million per year ongoing from 2030–31) to expand and extend funding to ACCOs** to provide culturally safe child-centred support available to First Nations children and young people and their families under SFVS; and
    - **$6.8 million over three years from 2024–25 to expand the Supporting Children After Separation Program** to provide specialised, longer-term support for children of separated families who are already engaged in counselling support, to avoid needing to transfer those cases to a SFVS.
- Other 2024-25 Budget measures included:
    - $6.0 million over two years from 2024–25 to support Primary Health Networks on the Central Coast to provide local outreach **trauma-informed healthcare support** for women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence or homelessness.
    - $6.5 million in 2024–25 to develop a pilot of age assurance technologies to protect children from **harmful online content**.
    - $7.6 million in additional support for women and children experiencing domestic violence and expanding **temporary accommodation places**, as part of the plan for A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia.
- Through the 2022-23 October budget, the Government provided:
    - $169.4 million for 500 new **frontline service and community workers** to support women and children experiencing violence.
    - $100 million over five years to continue the **Safe Places Emergency Accommodation program** via the Safe Places Inclusion Round.
        - In addition to the Department of Social Services, the Treasury is also working to increase crisis and transitional accommodation through implementing the Government's commitment to target $1.0 billion under the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF) towards **crisis and transitional accommodation** for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, and youth.
    - $3.6 million for a pilot program of trauma-informed services for children affected by family and domestic violence, tailored for children aged 6 to 12 who are struggling to reach developmental, social and educational milestones due to family and domestic violence (Helping Children Heal).
    - $40.4 million for Specialised Family Violence Services to expand support to assist individuals, couples and families who are experiencing, witnessing or at risk of family and domestic violence.
    - $34.8 million to deliver a national early intervention trial for young men and adolescent boys aged 12-18 years who present with adverse childhood experiences including family and domestic violence, and who are at risk of perpetrating family, domestic or sexual violence.
    - A children's policy package, including:

- $3 million to assist parents and carers to understand the importance of child development, learned parenting and to reduce the stigma associated with seeking support.
- $10 million for the development of a set of national principles and strategies to prevent children at risk of family and domestic violence entering child protection systems.
- Almost $7 million for the development of a nationally consistent approach to support non-parent carers in the raising of vulnerable children who required care.
- $8 million for the development and delivery of specific targeted policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth at risk of, or who have experienced Family Domestic and Sexual Violence.
- $2 million for the establishment of a National Advocate to report on the effectiveness of the National Framework and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people within both Commonwealth and State and Territories services and systems.

Jess hill Quarterly Essay

- Jess Hill called for a “pivot towards a trauma-informed approach to prevention, addressing intergeneration trauma in children and interrupting violent trajectories.”
  - The Government committed $81.3 million over six years from 2024–25 to enhance and expand child centric trauma informed supports for children and young people **to help break the cycle of violence**.
- As Office for Women sits within a central agency, we are aware of our need to **demonstrate national leadership**, particularly on the issue of child wellbeing and safety, to drive better outcomes for Australia’s children into the future.