



Australian Government

Towards 2025

An Australian Government
Strategy to Boost Women's
Workforce Participation

Implementation Plan
2017—18



Towards 2025 An Australian Government Strategy
to Boost Women's Workforce Participation Implementation Plan

© Commonwealth of Australia 2017

ISBN 978-1-925362-37-4

Copyright Notice

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en>).



Third party copyright

Wherever a third party holds copyright in this material, the copyright remains with that party. Their permission may be required to use the material. Please contact them directly.

Attribution

This publication should be attributed as follows: Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Towards 2025 A Strategy to Boost Australian Women's Workforce Participation.

Use of the Coat of Arms

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are detailed on the following website: <http://www.pmc.gov.au/government/its-honour>

Contents

Ministerial Statement	5
Implementation Plan 2017–18	6
Action area: Child care	8
Where are we?.....	9
Key actions for 2017–18.....	9
The Australian Government's new child care system	10
Action area: Workplace diversity and flexibility	12
Where are we?.....	13
Key actions for 2017–18.....	14
Action area: Jobs of the future	15
Where are we?.....	16
Key actions for 2017–18.....	17
Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE)	18
Action area: Economic security	20
Where are we?.....	21
Key actions for 2017–18.....	22
Action area: Financial incentives	23
Where are we?.....	24
Key actions for 2017–18.....	25
ParentsNext	26
Launch Into Work	27
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women	28
Key actions for 2017–18.....	29
Culturally and linguistically diverse women	31
Where are we?.....	32
Key actions for 2017–18.....	32
Mature age women	33
Where are we?.....	34
Key actions for 2017–18.....	34
jobactive Restart	35
Rural and regional women	36
Where are we?.....	37
Key actions for 2017–18.....	37
Women with disability	38
Where are we?.....	39
Key actions for 2017–18.....	39
JobAccess	40
Young women	42
Where are we?.....	43
Key actions for 2017–18.....	43
Youth Employment Package	44

Ministerial Statement



Supporting women to participate in the workforce is an economic and social priority for the Turnbull Government — it's good for women, families, business and our economy.

Boosting women's workforce participation is essential to raising living standards and securing Australia's future prosperity. It has the potential to add up to \$25 billion to the Australian economy.

Harnessing the power of our most important asset — the human capital of all 24 million Australians — will allow our children and grandchildren to capitalise on the opportunities of the 21st century economy.

That's why, under Australia's presidency, G20 leaders committed to reduce the gender participation gap by 25 per cent by 2025. For Australia, this means decreasing the gap by three percentage points from 12.1 per cent to 9.1 per cent by 2025. On current results, we are on track to achieve this goal.

The Turnbull Government has a strong record of supporting women in the workforce, with women's employment at a record high of over 5.6 million, representing 46.5 per cent of employed Australians.

The participation gap is narrowing, but we are not complacent. We will continue to work to ensure that we achieve our target of reducing the gender participation gap by 25 per cent by 2025.

That is why this Government is implementing a new child care system to provide parents with more choice and opportunity to work. A more affordable, accessible and flexible child care system will support families so they can choose their child care around their work, rather than limiting their work hours to suit their child care.

We are also supporting more women into the jobs of the future and establishing the environment to encourage more women to own and run their own business.

We are increasing women's financial literacy and helping them boost their superannuation to ensure that they are economically secure and independent.

We are also ensuring the right incentives are in place so that women can see both the short and long-term financial benefits of maintaining a connection with the workforce.

The Government is leading by example. We have set goals for 50-50 gender balance at all leadership levels in the Australian Public Service and for women to hold 50 per cent of Government board positions. Our efforts are paying off with women now representing 43 per cent of our ongoing Senior Executive Service employees and just over 41 per cent of all Australian Government board members.

This Strategy outlines the practical work the Turnbull Government is undertaking to increase the opportunities for women to work if that is their choice. We note that this is not the sole responsibility of government — business, families and the community all have a role to play. The ultimate objective of this Strategy is to enable women, men and families to have the freedom to make choices that best suit their individual circumstances.

Michaelia Cash

Minister for Women

Minister for Employment

Minister Assisting the

Prime Minister for the Public Service

Implementation Plan 2017–18



The inaugural 2017–18 Implementation Plan supports the rollout of Towards 2025: An Australian Government strategy to boost women’s workforce participation (the Strategy).

The Strategy lays out the Australian Government’s roadmap to meet its target of reducing the gap in participation rates between women and men (aged 15–64) by 25 per cent by 2025.

The Strategy is flexible, allowing the Government to adapt, adjust and determine the next steps based on monitoring and evaluation of existing and new policies and prevailing social and economic conditions.

It also allows the Government to take into account the varied and complex reasons women have lower participation rates than men, including age, education, family status, cultural background and caring responsibilities.

A new Implementation Plan will be developed each year which will outline action the Australian Government will take over the course of the next 12 months.

Implementation Plans will be released on an annual basis. Future Implementation Plans will also provide an overview of activity over the preceding 12 months and a summary of the key indicators used to measure progress towards meeting the 2025 target.

Like the Strategy, the Implementation Plan is built around five action areas:

- > Ensuring affordable, accessible and flexible child care,
- > Improving workplace diversity and flexibility,
- > Supporting women to innovate, succeed as entrepreneurs and thrive in jobs of the future,
- > Strengthening women's economic security, and
- > Enhancing financial incentives to work.

While increasing women's workforce participation is a national challenge, a one-size-fits-all approach will not provide all the answers.

To maximise success it is important to respond to the variety of women's circumstances and aspirations.

The Strategy and Implementation Plan identify six groups of women who may experience different or greater barriers to participating in the labour force:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women,
- > Culturally and linguistically diverse women,
- > Mature age women,
- > Rural and regional women,
- > Women with disability, and
- > Young women.

Action area: Child care



.....>

The Government wants families to have choice when they are making decisions about child care and work.

There are many factors that affect women's decisions to work including that women still bear a higher proportion of responsibility for raising children.

These factors are complex and affect individual women and their families differently.

Women's preference to care for their children themselves, their own and others' values and expectations, financial priorities and their share of unpaid work all interact in their decision making.

While the workforce participation rate of women with children is increasing, the participation rate for mothers is still below that of fathers and is strongly related to the age of their youngest child.

Young men and women (15–24 years old) start out on a similar footing, but the workforce participation gap increases dramatically when women have children. The participation rate of mothers aged 25 to 54 years with children aged under 15 years old remains below that of women in the same age group without children. By contrast, having children has either no impact or increases workforce participation for men.

Access to child care places and financial assistance with child care costs were two of the top three incentives to increase labour force participation in 2014–15, with over half of all women considering these issues to be 'very important'.

Where are we?

The Government is investing around \$37 billion on child care support to help ease cost of living pressures for families balancing work and parenting responsibilities, including those that need before and after school care for their children. It is estimated that the Government's new child care system will encourage more than 230,000 families to increase their involvement in paid employment.

The centrepiece of the new child care system, the Child Care Subsidy, will provide lower income families an 85 per cent rate of subsidy. This means that a family earning \$60,000, whose child care centre charges \$100 per day, will only pay around \$15 per day for child care. The reforms also abolish the current \$7,500 Child Care Rebate cap to ensure parents on family incomes of around \$185,000 or less (in 2017 terms) are not limited by a cap on the amount of child care they can access per year per child. Families earning more than around \$185,000 will benefit from an increased annual cap of around \$10,000 per year per child.

More than 1.2 million children attended approved child care during the 2016 September quarter, up 1.5 per cent on the previous September quarter. In the same quarter there were around 18,000 approved child care services operating across Australia — an increase of 2.2 per cent on the previous year.

Population growth will also play a key role in driving future demand for child care. The Productivity Commission estimates that just over 100,000 additional full-time formal early childhood education and care places will be needed by 2026. The largest category of growth is estimated to be out-of-school hours and vacation care with population growth expected to lead to a 30 per cent increase in need for these services in 15 years.

It is clear that more quality, affordable, accessible and flexible child care will give more mothers greater opportunity to enter into or remain in the workforce, if they choose to do so – which is why the Government has made the most significant reforms to the system in 40 years.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Implement the Government's new child care system including through the investment of \$37 billion on child care support to ease the cost of living pressures for families balancing work and parenting responsibilities.
- > Engage with families and child care services to ensure that they understand how reforms will affect them, and ensure that women can reap the full benefits of the changes. The [Family Child Care Subsidy Estimator](#) is an online tool which will help families plan for the changes that will take effect in July 2018 by calculating their entitlement to the new Child Care Subsidy.
- > In addition to the Government's increased investment into child care, the Australian Government has announced \$428 million to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education for the 2018 school year so that children in the earliest years have access to a quality preschool education in the year before they begin school.
- > Improve coordination of multiple programs to help families and providers work out what assistance is available to them through the new ICT system.

The Australian Government's new child care system

Helping families by making child care more affordable, accessible and flexible



- > Key elements of the Government's new child care system include the new Child Care Subsidy and the \$1.2 billion Child Care Safety Net. The Child Care Subsidy will replace the current Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate with a single, means tested payment. The Child Care Subsidy will commence in July 2018 and provide more access to subsidised child care to the families who work the most hours, and higher levels of financial support to the families who earn the least.
- > The reforms mean that families earning around \$65,000 (in 2017 terms) or less will receive the maximum subsidy rate of 85 per cent of the actual fee charged, or of the relevant hourly rate cap (whichever is lower). A family earning \$60,000, whose child care centre charges \$100 per day, will only pay around \$15 per day for child care.
- > The Government will abolish the Child Care Rebate cap of \$7,500 per child for families earning around \$185,000 or less. Families earning more than around \$185,000 will benefit from an increased annual cap of \$10,000 per year per child.
- > The Child Care Subsidy hourly rate caps, which are the maximum hourly rate the Government will subsidise for each service type are designed to place downward pressure on child care fees and arrest incessant fee increases.
- > The Child Care Safety Net will provide targeted assistance for disadvantaged communities and vulnerable children and their families to address barriers in accessing child care. Some elements of this program commenced in July 2016.
- > The Government recognises that children from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit most from quality early childhood education and care. This is why, for example, under the Child Care Safety Net, families earning around \$65,000 or less (in 2017 terms) who do not meet the activity test will have access to 24 hours of subsidised early learning per fortnight. That is equivalent to two weekly six-hour sessions, and will be subsidised at the rate of 85 per cent.
- > A new information technology system will provide a simple and easy user interface for families and child care services; simplify, streamline and automate administration of child care payments and programs; and ensure more effective compliance and minimise fraudulent misuse of taxpayer funds.
- > The Government is providing support to services in regional and remote areas, recognising that they require assistance to transition from grant funded programs to the new child care system.

Clare, Peter, Flynn and Grace

- > Peter and Clare have two children – Flynn (aged one) and Grace (aged four). Peter works full-time and Clare works part-time and together they have a family income of \$80,000. Flynn and Grace both attend long day care three days per week (\$100 per day per child) while Clare is at work.
- > Under the new child care system, Peter and Clare will be around \$3,400 better off a year.

Carol, James and Abby

- > Carol is a single mum with two year old twins, James and Abby. Carol works three days per week and James and Abby attend long day care on these days (\$100 per day per child). Carol earns \$50,000 per year.
- > Under the new child care system, Carol will be around \$3,100 better off a year.

Action area: Workplace diversity and flexibility



The Government is committed to making flexible work a normal part of the workplace, for both men and women.

Workplace flexibility allows women and men more choice and opportunity in determining how they blend work and family, and enables parents to work or work more.

Men who work flexibly are able to be more active and engaged fathers, take a greater share in unpaid work, and create opportunities for women to increase their paid work. Although many Australian men want to work flexibly, they are almost twice as likely as women to have their request for flexible work declined.

Whether an industry or occupation is seen to be flexible and have a family friendly culture is a driving factor for many women when making decisions about paid work, especially those returning to paid work after caring for children. This flexibility is needed, in part, because women do more unpaid work than men. Women spend 64 per cent of their average weekly working time on unpaid care work compared to 36 per cent for men. We can see how this breakdown might affect women's decisions about work, for example, working part time at higher rates than men or not working until their children are of school age.

The majority of industries with a large share of women also have the highest share of part-time employment and conversely for men, the majority of industries with a large share of men also have the lowest share of part-time employment. Flexibility should be encouraged and normalised for both men and women in all occupations and industries.

The Government is focused on promoting the economic and financial benefit to business from increased women's participation. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 per cent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. Companies with women board members outperformed others by 8.7 per cent over five years.

Where are we?

Many Australian businesses have already taken substantive steps to reduce barriers to women's participation and increase the number of female employees, including into non-traditional roles in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The Government's [Women's Leadership and Development Strategy](#) provides funding support to organisations to improve gender equality and support women's economic empowerment, safety and leadership. This is achieved by promoting and supporting greater representation of Australian women in leadership and decision making roles, in particular in non-traditional fields of work.

The Fair Work Ombudsman, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Centre for Workplace Leadership and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency all provide information and tools for employers and employees to promote flexible working arrangements. For example, the [Australian Human Rights Commission's Supporting Working Parents website](#) provides information on rights and obligations in the workplace on pregnancy, parental leave and return to work.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency

The [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) (WGEA) helps to improve gender equality in Australian workplaces, including by promoting flexible working and the need for more women in leadership positions, through advice and practical tools to help employers improve their gender performance.

WGEA administers the annual workplace gender reporting requirements for larger private sector entities and universities. This reporting includes gender equality indicators in Australian workplaces such as the availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees and to working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities and the availability of flexible working provisions for employees, and provision of employer funded paid parental leave.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Expand the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's framework for recognising businesses who are leading in gender equality, including flexibility. This includes extending the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation by opening the citation to public sector organisations and continuing to drive gender equality outcomes. In addition, developing an awards program to recognise innovative gender equality initiatives among a broader pool of employers, including small and medium enterprises.
- > Introduce voluntary reporting for public sector employers on the six gender equality indicators outlined in the Workplace Gender Equality Act.
- > Implement and progress the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy to ensure the Public Service remains a role model for gender equality and flexibility in the workforce.
- > Promote the economic and business benefits of flexible work for small and medium enterprises, with a strong focus on supporting working mothers, as well as challenging people's expectations about the work men and women do.
- > Continue to provide funding through the Women's Leadership and Development Strategy to develop women's leadership, economic security and women's equal place in society, including:
 - \$250,000 to the Master Builders Association to the Advancing Women in Building and Construction Pilot to encourage more women to enter into and lead successful careers in the overwhelmingly male-dominated sector.
 - \$490,000 to the Australian Mines and Metals Association to deliver the Australian Women in Resources Alliance e-Mentoring Program that offers mentoring opportunities to women in the heavily male-dominated resource industry.
- > Reduce gender inequality in non-traditional fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and entrepreneurship through the Expanding Opportunities for Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship initiative (see Jobs of the Future action area).
- > Work towards the Australian Government's target for 50 per cent women on Government boards overall, and 40 per cent women on each individual board.
- > Expand the BoardLinks Program – a key tool for achieving the gender diversity on boards target, which features a database of talented women seeking appointment to a Government board.
- > Develop training on the differential impacts of gender in mainstream policy development.

Action area: Jobs of the future



.....>

The Government is committed to preparing women for work in growth industries and getting women into the jobs of the future.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) knowledge is associated with 75 per cent of the fastest growing occupations, innovations and higher paying jobs.

The gender distribution of people with qualifications in STEM is highly skewed against women in Australia with males making up 84 per cent of all persons with qualifications. Only one in four information technology graduates and fewer than one in 10 engineering graduates in Australia is female.

Innovation is critical to maintaining living standards and creating more and higher paying jobs for Australians.

In April 2016, the Government released Australia's Cyber Security Strategy to meet the dual challenges of the digital age. The Government is committed to Australians having the cyber security skills and knowledge to thrive in the digital age. To achieve this, we need to understand and address the causes of low participation by women in cyber security careers. This is a focus of the Cyber Security Strategy's Action Plan as we work towards achieving Australia's cyber security goals by 2020.

The Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA) is an important step towards embracing new ideas in innovation and science, and harnessing new sources of growth to deliver the next age of economic prosperity in Australia. It is also a critical element of the Government's plan to ensure that women are studying and working in the growth areas of STEM.

The Government is also working to encourage more Australian women to start their own businesses and become entrepreneurs. The integration of STEM skills with other skills like entrepreneurship is key to the success of leading organisations in a large number of fields and industries. Australia will rely on STEM skills and innovation to support future economic growth.

The care economy is increasingly important — for both the national economy and the economic wellbeing of Australians. It will be the largest industry growth sector in the Australian labour market to 2020 and currently has the highest proportion of female employees. This presents an opportunity to reduce gender segregation by increasing men's participation in these growth industries as the economy transitions.

Encouraging men into women-concentrated industries is as important as encouraging women into traditionally male-dominated fields. With the decline of many male-dominated industries, male workers are encouraged to consider growth industries such as health care and social assistance.

Where are we?

It is critical to get more women into STEM industries, which have experienced significant growth over recent years. Under the NISA, the Government has committed \$13 million to encourage more women and girls to pursue STEM related careers and to encourage women to become entrepreneurs. This includes a total of \$12 million for the expansion of the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) pilot, the establishment of a Male Champions of Change in STEM group and grants to organisations that support

or engage school and university students, women starting their STEM careers, entrepreneurs and innovators.

The Government has also committed \$31.2 million in internships and post-school career advice to increase support for women and girls to study and work in STEM. This includes \$28.2 million from 2017 to 2020 for the Supporting more women in STEM careers: Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) National Research Internships Program. The program will support 1400 new industry internships, with a particular focus on women researchers, through a nationally expanded PhD industry internships program run by AMSI. The funds will also deliver a new and contemporary National Career Education Strategy (NCES). The NCES will focus on developing young people's 21st century skills to equip young people with the necessary skills to navigate complex careers across a range of industries and professions.

The Government is also providing \$15 million to establish a dedicated STEM academy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. The academy aims to spark interest in STEM careers and ultimately address the under-representation of women, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, in STEM fields.

Women in the Australian startup community had a record year in 2016 — women were 23.5 per cent of startup founders, up from 16.1 per cent in 2014. In the decade from 2005 to 2015, the number of women running businesses has grown by 4.8 per cent, compared to an 8.7 per cent decline in the number of men operating a business. Women now comprise just over one third of all Australian business operators (34 per cent or 668,670 business operators, up from 31 per cent in 1994).

Employment projections to November 2020 show that some industries with large shares of female employment are likely to experience substantial growth. The health care and social assistance industry (78.3 per cent women) is projected to make the largest contribution to employment growth, increasing by 16.4 per cent. The education and training industry

(71.4 per cent women) is expected to increase by 13.0 per cent.

The disability sector workforce is estimated to more than double to meet the demand of the full National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) by 2020. A number of these workers will not require formal qualifications, but will need to possess the right skills, aptitudes and attitudes to support people with disability to exercise choice and control over the support they receive. The clientcentred nature of the NDIS is likely to create significant flexible or part-time employment opportunities that may be attractive to people wanting to return to work, particularly those who want to combine parenting and working.

The male-dominated automotive manufacturing industry in South Australia and Victoria is set to close by the end of 2017. The successful redeployment of workers is dependent on their ability to develop new skills that are in demand in other industries.

To help facilitate these changes in the local labour market, the Government established the Geelong Employment Facilitator in 2013 to identify job opportunities for workers in the region, including establishing projects to encourage workers from traditionally male industries into non-traditional roles. One such project was the Retrenched Workers Community Services Taster Program, which particularly targeted retrenched workers access to opportunities in an area that is traditionally female focused.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Invest \$10 million for the new Launch into Work program, which is targeted at women. The program will fund preemployment partnerships with non-government organisations and businesses that provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready. Employers will use Launch into Work projects to recruit for entry-level positions that have prospects for career growth and will be required to commit to employing suitable project participants who successfully complete

the program. Projects will be flexible and co-designed with employers, jobactive providers, registered training organisations and other stakeholders to ensure both employer and job seeker needs are met.

- > Introduce the \$33 million Boosting the Local Care Workforce Package, to help service providers in the disability and aged care sectors grow their workforce. The Government will provide timely assistance to meet job shortages in the sector by helping employers increase the supply of care workers in the right geographical areas to meet the needs of NDIS participants and the aged care sector. This package will create more jobs in regions that require strong jobs growth as a result of the NDIS roll out.
- > Implement the National Innovation and Science Agenda, including initiatives designed to encourage women to study and work in STEM.
- > Partner with and promote companies which are leading when it comes to getting women in to non-traditional, growth industries.
- > Work with the Male Champions of Change in STEM to ensure women's participation and leadership in STEM industries and key organisations.
- > Invest in leading private sector and not-for-profit initiatives through the Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship grants.
- > Continue to provide funding through the Women's Leadership and Development Strategy (WLDS) and support to develop women's participation in growth industries.
- > Identify opportunities for ASIC's MoneySmart First Business app to specifically support women starting a business.

Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE)

SAGE is a national pilot program promoting gender equity and diversity in higher education, medical research institutes and publicly-funded research organisations. SAGE is based on the successful Athena SWAN Charter of the UK, which has been in operation for over ten years and has seen significant results in improving gender diversity and bolstering women's leadership roles within science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) institutions.

SAGE is adapting the Athena SWAN charter to suit the Australian research system. It requires participating organisations to collect, analyse and present data on gender equity policies and practices; identify gaps and opportunities for improvement; and make a public commitment, in the form of an action plan, to make those improvements happen.

Forty Australian higher education and research organisations ranging from medical research institutes to government research agencies such as CSIRO have signed on to be SAGE participants.

Over time, SAGE aims to eliminate persistent gender bias in the higher education and research sectors, increase the number of women with STEMM skills and capabilities in the workforce, improve career pathways for researchers and innovators, and increase the number of women in leadership and senior executive roles in research organisations and STEMM-based industries.

SAGE has changed the conversation around gender equity in the research sector — instead of simply talking about gender equity as a problem, research organisations are taking action to deliver measurable change in practices and cultures.

[Read about some inspiring women doing important research in the STEMM field.](#)

Forty partner organisations are already implementing initiatives in response to their assessments of where change is needed. For some examples, please visit: www.sciencegenderequity.org.au/gender-equity-initiatives/

SAGE–Athena SWAN pilot

Initiatives tackling #genderequity

Forty partner organisations are already implementing initiatives in response to their assessments of where change is needed.

For some examples, please visit:

www.sciencegenderequity.org.au/gender-equity-initiatives

Federation University



Women Leading on the Edge program – mentoring and networking activities for women in academic and professional leadership



Improving the visibility of female researchers in STEM through social media



Development Fellowships – for early career researchers, and to retain mid-career and senior academic staff of exceptional caliber

University of South Australia



Ensuring gender parity within key leadership committees



Inclusive infrastructure



Women's Development Program – to improve future employment prospects in leadership roles

University of Queensland



Promoting Women Fellowships – to increase the percentage of women at Senior Lecturer level and above, and to facilitate the career progression of academic women

University of Melbourne



Women-only positions in the School of Mathematics and Statistics



Changes to sabbatical leave policy to allow greater flexibility



Development of the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy



Career Advancement for Academic Women – prepare and support academic women applying for promotion

Action area: Economic security



The Government is committed to achieving economic security for all Australian women to enable them to be independent and empowered.

We know that a woman's level of paid and unpaid work determines her economic security over the course of her life — the more a woman undertakes paid work, the greater her likelihood of a financially secure working life and retirement.

We also know that the Australian labour market is highly gender segregated in both occupations and industries. Men tend to work in industries such as construction, mining and manufacturing. In contrast, women account for more than 70 per cent of all employees in the education and training and the health care and social assistance industries.

Gender segregation also refers to the tendency of women and men to study different fields and how women and men participate (full-time or part-time) in the labour market.

Women are more likely to work part-time or casually, take breaks from paid employment to provide unpaid care for others, and be over-represented in lower paid industries and occupations, resulting in lower earnings and retirement savings compared to men.

That is why the Government has implemented a number of measures to enable women to boost their superannuation and reduce the gender pay gap.

Improving financial literacy will also help ensure women properly understand the financial implications of working, working more hours, getting a pay rise and what their retirement savings will look like.

Where are we?

The Government has taken significant steps to increase women's economic security in retirement through a number of measures designed to boost women's superannuation balances.

The Paid Parental Leave scheme aims to extend mothers' time away from paid work, while increasing lifetime attachment to the labour force. In 2015–16, 169,745 mothers started receiving Parental Leave Payment.

The Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset reduces the tax on superannuation contributions for low income earners, of whom a high proportion are women. The offset will ensure low income earners are generally not paying more tax on savings placed in superannuation than they do on income earned outside of superannuation.

More people can claim a tax offset (up to \$540) for contributions to superannuation for their low income spouse by increasing the income test threshold for the recipient spouse from \$10,800 to \$37,000. This will allow more people who make contributions to their low income spouses to benefit from the tax offset, helping low income earners, a high proportion of whom are women, to build their superannuation balances.

From 1 July 2018, any unused concessional superannuation contributions will be able to be carried forward for up to five years for women with superannuation balances of \$500,000 and lower.

The Government also contributes up to \$500 per year to low or middle income earners who make after-tax superannuation contributions. Women make up a majority of the beneficiaries of these contributions — in 2014–15, 300,000 low and middle income women were entitled to \$90 million of co-contributions.

Contribution splitting allows people to help their spouse accumulate their own superannuation by 'splitting' up to 85 per cent of their concessional contributions in a year, and broadens superannuation to individuals outside the workforce, the majority of whom are women.

The Government's efforts to close the gender pay gap also play a key role in increasing women's economic security. The WGEA works with the private sector and provides a number of resources to assist employers to close the gender pay gap.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Introduce the new measure that will allow any unused concessional superannuation contributions to be carried forward, for up to five years, for women with superannuation balances of \$500,000 and less from 1 July 2018. 97 per cent of women with a superannuation account have a balance under \$500,000 and will clearly benefit from this change.
- > Strengthen the [National Financial Literacy Strategy](#) to improve the scope and depth of financial literacy resources for women to improve their financial capabilities at key life events (such as having and caring for children, managing divorce and separation, and caring for ageing family members). This includes partnering with organisations that support women when they are facing changing and/or challenging financial circumstances. Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has received \$16 million in additional funding for this and other initiatives under the Strategy.
- > Expand the reach and content of [ASIC's Women's Money Toolkit](#), a free online resource to provide women with the knowledge and confidence to manage their finances and achieve their financial goals.
- > Work with the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) to prepare guidelines to give greater certainty to employers about the lawfulness of any actions they may wish to take to reduce the gender retirement savings gap. Employers might assume that it would be a breach of the Sex Discrimination Act to make additional payments to women to counteract the loss of retirement savings if, for example, they have taken time off work to care for their children. The Sex Discrimination Act allows a person to take 'special measures' to achieve substantive equality between men and women, which do not constitute unlawful discrimination. An example of such an initiative is ANZ who make super contributions to all employees for any period of paid and unpaid parental leave taken.
- > Continue to work with the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) to provide employers with resources on closing the gender pay gap, and requiring private sector employers with 100 or more employees to report on key gender indicators.
- > Continue to use [Women's Leadership and Development Strategy](#) grants to encourage both women and men into non-traditional roles to break down occupational segregation.
- > Continue to support campaigns such as the Workplace Gender Equality Agency campaign [Women's Work/Men's Work](#).
- > Work with industries to get women into traditionally 'male' industries and roles, for example [Australian Women in Resources Alliance e-mentoring program](#), an initiative of the Australian Mines and Metals Association.

Action area: Financial incentives



.....>

The Government is committed to assisting women and their families to make well informed choices about work. Women's economic participation has a positive effect on economic growth which is good for all Australians.

Australians who work will also interact with the tax system. Australia has a progressive personal income tax system. That is, people with higher taxable incomes pay more tax as a proportion of their income than people on lower incomes. This reflects the belief that people who have more money should contribute more, so the Government can provide the services that Australians expect, such as health care, education and family payments.

Personal income taxes are only part of the story — Australia is well known for its targeted transfer system (or government payments to individuals and families). Progressive income taxes and targeted government payments work together to produce fairer outcomes — as a person's income increases, they pay more tax and may receive lower government payments.

Women's decisions about whether or not to work, or how much to work, play out differently for every individual and family. The financial benefits of working are affected by specific circumstances such as salary, the number and age of children in the family, use of child care and eligibility for government payments. While the combination of paying more tax and/or receiving lower government payments (effective marginal tax rates or EMTRs) is one of the factors in these decisions, there are many others.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that women are influenced by factors such as caring for their children, flexible work arrangements and access to child care to a greater extent than the potential loss of government payments in their decisions about whether or not to work.

Women's decisions are also affected by their own and others' values and priorities, broader social expectations and the level of unpaid work that they undertake.

Where are we?

The Government is focused on ensuring that there are financial incentives for women to return to the workforce, particularly after having children.

The Government is ensuring women are aware of the long-term benefits of working, including maintaining connections with a workplace and their qualifications, and adding to retirement savings after taking a break from work to care for children.

The [National Financial Literacy Strategy](#) supports women to build an accurate picture of the financial implications of commencing or returning to work, working more hours,

getting a pay rise and how income tax and government payments adjust with these changes. The Strategy also focuses on how work improves retirement income long term.

Workforce participation and self-reliance are central to improving long-term wellbeing. The Government is committed to ensuring that all Australians who have the capacity to work do so, rather than being reliant on welfare. The Government is creating a clearer, more coherent set of mutual obligation requirements for working age welfare recipients and increasing support for them to get a job.

The Government is making a \$263 million investment in the successful ParentsNext pre-employment program which will help more parents of young children, who may be at risk of long-term welfare dependency, to plan and prepare for employment by the time their children start school. From 1 July 2018, ParentsNext will assist around 68,000 parents each year nationally — around 96 per cent of participants are expected to be women.

Unemployed Australians, particularly those 50 years and over, will benefit from increased services and resources to help them find work and move off welfare. There will also be greater incentives for employers to offer work experience opportunities.

The Government is investing over \$100 million to assist mature age people, including women, to identify new labour market opportunities and reskill. This comprises the \$98 million [Career Transition Assistance Program](#) and a \$9.6 million investment to expand and enhance the [National Work Experience Programme](#).

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Implement the Government's new child care system including through the investment of \$37 billion on child care support to ease the cost of living pressures for families balancing work and parenting responsibilities.
- > Strengthen the National Financial Literacy Strategy to improve the scope and depth of financial literacy resources for women to understand the long-term benefits of working and maintaining a connection with the workforce. ASIC has received \$16 million in additional funding for this and other initiatives under the Strategy.
- > Implement reforms to welfare payments that better assist recipients to participate in the labour force, prevent lengthy absences from the labour market and reinforce self-reliance through work.
- > Undertake a gender analysis of employment services to both improve current service delivery where this is possible within existing program parameters, as well as inform the design of employment services by 2020 where there is significant potential to improve service delivery to women.
- > Fund pre-employment projects via the new Launch into Work program which will provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist women to become work ready.
- > Invest, from 1 July 2018, \$263 million to expand the ParentsNext program. Each year, this expansion will assist around 68,000 parents of young children, who may be at risk of long-term welfare dependency, to plan and prepare for employment by the time their children are at school.
- > Implement a new \$98 million, Career Transition Assistance Program that will deliver a short, intensive course for mature age people looking for work to prepare for new career paths and opportunities.
- > Expand the National Work Experience Programme, which will offer older Australians more opportunities to upskill, as well as the Pathway to Work pilots, a series of industry-based pilots that will be established in selected growth industries and/or large infrastructure projects.
- > Continue to implement the Priority Investment Approach, which aims to improve lifetime wellbeing through increasing people's capacity to live independently of welfare and address the risk of intergenerational welfare dependence. The Try Test and Learn Fund has been established (\$96 million over 4 years) to test innovative policy approaches that create a path out of the welfare system. The initial priority groups include young parents and young carers; with these groups having a disproportionately high number of young women.

ParentsNext

ParentsNext — assisting parents to plan and prepare for work.

ParentsNext is a pre-employment program currently operating in 10 local government areas across Australia.

ParentsNext assists parents of young children (under six years), in particular those at risk of long-term unemployment, to plan and prepare for employment before their children are at school. The majority of participants are women.

ParentsNext providers help parents identify their education and employment goals, develop a pathway to achieve their goals and link them to appropriate activities in the local community.

As part of the program, participants attend appointments with their ParentsNext provider, develop and sign a Participation Plan and participate in their agreed activity.

Most parents are required to participate in ParentsNext as a condition of receiving a Parenting Payment, but eligible parents can also volunteer for ParentsNext assistance.

In the first 12 months of ParentsNext (4 April 2016 to 31 March 2017), over 16,800 parents have been referred to a ParentsNext provider.

Having been successfully operated in 10 Local Government areas, the Turnbull Government has allocated \$263 million to expand the program across Australia from July 2018.

Since migrating to Australia from India six years ago, Anitha had been primarily focussed on raising her two children. Ready to get back into the workforce, she found herself feeling disheartened that she couldn't find work in Australia despite her nine years of Accounting experience in India. Wanting to explore her opportunities to get back into work, Anitha made contact with ParentsNext.

ParentsNext is a free Australian Government program that provides specialised support and assistance to help parents with children under the age of six to plan and prepare for future employment.

To help Anitha gain local work experience and increase her confidence, her local ParentsNext provider, Belinda, assisted her to update her résumé and to find a paid traineeship in an Accounting firm. She also helped Anitha obtain a driver's license so she could get herself to and from her traineeship.

"I went to ParentsNext and met Belinda. She helped me to write my résumé. This was helpful for me to find my accounting job," said Anitha.

Anitha is now completing her traineeship and feels ParentsNext is providing her with the additional support she needs.

"Once I entered into ParentsNext, I felt very positive. Because I come from overseas our family is not here so it's good there are some people to look after us," said Anitha.

Watch Anitha share her ParentsNext story on the Department of Employment YouTube channel. To find out more about ParentsNext and to see if you're eligible to participate visit employment.gov.au/parentsnext.

Launch Into Work

UnitingCare Australia and the Australian Government partnership.

The Government has committed \$10 million for the new Launch into Work program.

The program will fund pre-employment partnerships that provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready.

Employers will use Launch into Work projects to recruit for entry level positions that have prospects for career growth and will be required to commit to employing suitable project participants who successfully complete the program.

Projects will be flexible and co-designed as partnerships with employers, jobactive providers, registered training organisations and other stakeholders to ensure both employer and job seeker needs are met. Men can also participate in this program.

The program is targeted at women and will support Australia's G20 goal to reduce the gender gap in women's workforce participation by 25 per cent by 2025.

The Launch into Work Program builds on the successful 2016 partnership between the Department of Employment, UnitingCare Australia and the Office for Women to design and implement pre-employment projects to help women into the workforce within UnitingCare agencies.

In 2016, the Department of Employment partnered with UnitingCare Australia and the Office for Women to design and implement pre-employment projects to help women into the workforce and fill positions within UnitingCare agencies.

Project participants were job seekers from jobactive and undertook targeted training, work experience and mentoring to build their knowledge and work-readiness skills. This gave many job seekers an opportunity to gain the skills and experience they need for roles for which they would otherwise be overlooked.

Three pilot projects were delivered in South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland. All three projects had a 100 per cent completion rate.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have a considerably lower rate of workforce participation compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men (51.5 per cent and 65 per cent respectively).

The Government is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women play a central role in a strong and diverse Australian economy – as employees, employers, business operators, entrepreneurs, and leaders. Indigenous women are achieving great things and are providing an example of success for future generations across Australia.

We are working in partnership with Indigenous women to ensure our First Australians are able to take up opportunities in our economy and be leaders in their communities. For example, under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Australian Government is supporting the Wirrpanda Foundation's Deadly Sista Girlz Program to empower and enable young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls to make good choices for themselves.

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women continue to face unique challenges when joining the workforce. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls often have caring responsibilities at an earlier age – for children and for family. A third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have their first child by the age of 20, often before connecting with the workforce.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children experience disproportionately high rates of family and domestic violence throughout their lives, which has significant and long lasting impacts on their capacity to engage in education, work and community life.

The Government is working with Indigenous communities to address the scourge of violence through a \$46 million investment through the Women's Safety Package and Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children as well as significant investment under the IAS to address the drivers of violence.

Through the Indigenous Business Sector Strategy, the Government is investing in the next generation of entrepreneurs which breaks down barriers for future generations and creates a positive cycle of economic empowerment that will build over time. Indigenous women have a particularly important role to play as entrepreneurs, bringing a unique perspective for their customers.

The Government continues to ensure its mainstream employment services feature a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers, including women.

Where are we?

- > We already have a strong record of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- > From July 2015, the Government is spending almost \$49 million on education, supporting more than 9,200 young Indigenous women.
- > The Government has provided \$99 million to support around 7,500 Indigenous Australians into guaranteed jobs through Vocational Training and Employment Centres – 41 per cent taken up by women.
- > The Government has committed to a 3 per cent Indigenous employment target across the Commonwealth public sector by 2018.
- > The Government has committed to a target of 3 per cent of Commonwealth procurement contracts to Indigenous suppliers by 2020 to drive the growth of the Indigenous business sector and Indigenous employment. The first year target was exceeded – the Government awarded

nearly six times its 2015–16 target of 256 contracts (0.05 per cent) to Indigenous businesses.

- > The Government has established an Indigenous Entrepreneurs Fund so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can start or grow a small business and run enterprises that employ other people.
- > Investments in addressing family violence in Indigenous communities include:
 - > \$21 million under the Women's Safety Package to ensure that police are better equipped to protect victims and hold perpetrators to account, in remote communities across the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia;
 - > \$25 million under the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children to deliver trauma-informed interventions to change violent behaviours, build stronger families and better support victims of family violence;
 - > Significant investment under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) to address the drivers of violence, including alcohol and drug treatment services, support to improve remote policing and activities to prevent offending, re-offending and reduce violence.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Create opportunities for Indigenous Australians to find work, accelerating progress toward Closing the Gap between employment outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through a \$55.7 million Indigenous Employment package:
 - From 1 January 2018, the Closing the Gap – Employment Services Package will deliver pre-employment training and mentoring for Indigenous participants, and expand access to the Transition to Work program to all Indigenous job seekers aged 21 years or under;
 - jobactive will be boosted to deliver up-front intensive employment services

to Indigenous job seekers, including an increase in the Indigenous wage subsidy from \$6,500 to \$10,000, and the establishment of Indigenous communitybased work experience projects with meaningful career pathways.

- > Provide \$263 million to expand the ParentsNext program. In the 2017-18 Budget, the Government has committed \$113 million to provide an intensive service offering to all ParentsNext participants in 30 locations. In 20 of these locations, a high number of Parenting Payment recipients are Indigenous. The increased services will include additional pre-employment training, mentoring, work experience, wage subsidies and job opportunities to help recipients plan and prepare for employment by the time their children start school.
- > Provide additional funding for the Prison to Work program to provide all Indigenous prisoners access to in-prison employment services to help them prepare for post-release employment. The new Prison to Work program will have a particular focus on assisting Indigenous women prisoners to help that make successful transitions once released from prison.
- > Invest an additional \$138 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Government's 1967 Referendum 50th Anniversary Indigenous Education Package including \$41 million to directly support Indigenous women and girls' access and engagement in education and employment. The Package will also include \$25 million for a new STEM Scholarships Fund to support Indigenous students to study and secure jobs in STEM fields, including a \$15 million contribution to a Girls STEM academy.
- > Increase progress against the target of 3 per cent Indigenous employment across the Commonwealth public sector by 2018 — this has already shown progress with the Indigenous workforce increasing to 2.4 per cent.
- > Greater access to finance and business support suited to the needs of Indigenous businesses with a focus on Indigenous entrepreneurs and start-ups from 1 July 2017. This is an important part of the Government's plan to supercharge the Indigenous business sector – the Indigenous Business Sector Strategy (IBSS) – which has been released for consultation. The IBSS includes an Indigenous Entrepreneurs Capital Scheme to provide Indigenous businesses access to private sector finance, as well as better support services.
- > Fund pre-employment projects via the new Launch into Work program which will provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready. Projects are flexible and some will be designed to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- > Identify talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women leaders to be considered as part of the BoardLinks program.
- > Continue funding for girls' academies in high schools, so that young women can realise their leadership potential.
- > Support Community Development Program providers to increase their focus on getting young women and girls who leave school early into vocational training, where re-engagement in school or other education is not possible.
- > Consider trialling local and best practice models for supporting young mothers to complete their education and transition into work (for example, Cape York Girls Academy).
- > Strengthen the evidence base, including investigating the cultural and behavioural motivators for why girls and young women leave school before they complete Year 12.
- > Work with Indigenous Australians to address the impact of family violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including through \$25 million under the Third Action Plan to support trauma-informed therapeutic services, intensive family focused case management and holistic, case managed crisis support to Indigenous women experiencing family violence.

Culturally and linguistically diverse women

.....>

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women have a significantly lower rate of workforce participation compared to CALD men (47.3 per cent and 69.5 per cent respectively).

Australia's success as a migrant country depends on the economic participation of migrants, both men and women. Migrant women face particular challenges when it comes to economic participation and financial security.

The key barriers to employment for skilled women who have migrated to Australia include women's lower proficiency in English and lack of local work experience, limited understanding of Australian workplace culture, and limited recognition of their skills/qualifications. Key barriers to employment for women humanitarian entrants include family and caring responsibilities, lack of work experience and lower educational attainment prior to arrival and mental and physical health issues.

Women from CALD backgrounds also experience limited opportunities to gain drivers licences, encounter traditional cultural expectations of women as domestic caregivers, and child care and community care responsibilities that inhibit employment opportunities.

That's why the Australian Government has a strong focus on the three Es — English language proficiency, employment and education — when providing settlement services to migrants and humanitarian entrants.

The Government continues to ensure its mainstream employment services feature a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs to help CALD and refugee job seekers, including women.

Where are we?

- > The Government has a strong focus on the three Es — English language proficiency, employment and education — when providing settlement services to migrants and humanitarian entrants.
- > We have ensured that jobactive features a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs to help CALD and refugee job seekers, including women. In December 2016, the Government started the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme Highly Disadvantaged Trial to help highly disadvantaged job seekers, including CALD women, overcome barriers to starting their own business.
- > A number of our Empowering YOUth Initiatives focus specifically on getting refugees into jobs, and the Government funds the Friendly Nation Initiative, a business-led strategy that seeks to increase employment, mentoring, training and internship opportunities for refugees and humanitarian migrants.
- > As part of the Youth Employment Strategy, the Government is investing \$22.1 million in the Transition Support for Young Refugees and Other Vulnerable Migrants (YTS pilot) initiative. The YTS pilot will test innovative approaches to help young humanitarian entrants and other vulnerable young migrants to build capability and resilience, to engage with education and make successful transitions to employment. Almost half the participants are young women.
- > The Government also provides support to the Friendly Nation Initiative, a business-led strategy that seeks to increase employment, mentoring, training and internship opportunities for refugees and humanitarian migrants.
- > We have partnered with the Australian Institute of Company Directors to provide 55 full fee scholarships to aspiring female directors from culturally and linguistically diverse, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds to attend their highly regarded Company Directors or Foundations of Directorship programs.
- > The Government is investing \$5.7 million in 30 new National Community Hubs. The Hubs provide a place for local residents, businesses and community services to help newly-arrived migrants and refugees forge connections and access support services.
- > Supported by the Australian Government, the Australian Multicultural Council has commissioned the Australian Institute of Family Studies to undertake the research project Empowering Migrant and Refugee Women to identify good practice services and/or programs and gaps in service and/or program delivery.
- > The Third Action Plan 2016–2019 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022 (the National Plan) expands the trial of an intensive, recovery-focused support program for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have experienced violence to help them to improve life skills and employment prospects.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Deliver the Career Pathways Pilot for Humanitarian Entrants targeting newly arrived humanitarian entrants with vocational level English language proficiency and skills or qualifications gained overseas, to improve career pathways into similar jobs in Australia.
- > Invest, from 1 July 2018, \$263 million over four years to expand the ParentsNext program. This expansion will assist parents of young children, who may be at risk of long-term welfare dependency, to plan and prepare for employment by the time their children are at school.
- > Fund through the new Launch into Work program, pre-employment partnerships that provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready. Projects are flexible and will be designed to meet the specific needs of culturally and linguistically diverse women.
- > As of April 2017, refugees will also be eligible to participate in Youth Jobs PaTH which will provide job seekers with employability skills training and internships to give them the work experience they need to find work.
- > Continue to provide information about the value of fostering a diverse workplace can be found in various Government publications, such as the Connections booklet for employers considering recruiting someone with a migrant or refugee background.

Mature age women

.....>

Mature age women have a considerably lower rate of workforce participation compared to mature age men (58.8 per cent and 71.9 per cent respectively).

With the ageing of the Australian population, it is now more important than ever to use the skills and experience of older workers and encourage them to remain in the workforce.

Some of the barriers to employment that older Australians face identified in the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Willing to Work* inquiry include age discrimination, difficulties accessing training and difficulties arranging flexible work opportunities.

The inquiry also heard that older women are more likely than older men to be perceived as having outdated skills and as being too slow to learn new skills. Additionally, although mature age people have a lower unemployment rate than younger people, they tend to have greater difficulty finding subsequent employment when they do become unemployed.

The Government continues to ensure its mainstream employment services feature a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs to help mature age job seekers, including women.

Where are we?

- > The Government is committed to giving older women the choice to remain in, or re-enter, the workforce.
- > Our Restart wage subsidy program provides eligible employers with a subsidy of up to \$10,000 over six months if they hire an eligible income support or pension recipient, 50 years of age or older who has been unemployed and on income support for six months. Since July 2014, over 5,000 women have been placed into a job with the help of a Restart wage subsidy.
- > The pre-employment partnership with UnitingCare Australia involved UnitingCare training, mentoring and employing women to provide them with real jobs and possible future career pathways within the community and aged care services of the UnitingCare network. Participants undertook training to build their knowledge and work-readiness skills. 35 women participated in three pilot projects in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. The Government has now committed \$10 million for further partnerships with a range of employers and industries nationally as part of the Launch into Work program.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Implement a new \$98 million, Career Transition Assistance Program that will deliver a short, intensive course for mature age people looking for work to identify and prepare for new career paths and opportunities.
- > Expand the National Work Experience Programme, which will offer older Australians more opportunities to upskill, as well as establish the Pathway to Work pilots, a series of industry-based pilots in selected growth industries and/or large infrastructure projects.
- > Continue to implement and promote the Restart wage subsidy program, which provides eligible employers with a subsidy of up to \$10,000 (GST inclusive) over six months if they hire a job seeker 50 years of age or older who has been in receipt of an income support payment or pension for six months.
- > Fund the new Launch into Work program, pre-employment partnerships that provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready. Projects are flexible and will be designed to meet the specific needs of mature age women.
- > Commission qualitative research to identify the barriers facing women aged 45–64 years who are not in the labour force and not on income support, with the aim of identifying approaches that would encourage them into work.
- > Consider the recommendations of the Willing to Work report, launched by the Attorney-General in May 2016, which revealed pervasive workplace discrimination against mature age people including women. The report contains 56 recommendations, including policy and legislative reforms, to change attitudes and erode barriers that prevent these Australians from fully participating in society.

jobactive Restart



Restart is an Australian Government wage subsidy that encourages businesses to employ mature age job seekers who are 50 years of age and over and who have been on income support for more than six months.

Employers can receive a financial incentive of up to \$10,000 (GST inclusive) over six months if they employ eligible mature age job seekers. Payments are made over six months and employers can negotiate flexible payment options with employment service providers as frequently as necessary to meet business needs. Employers may be able to receive a kickstart payment of up to 40 per cent of the total wage subsidy after four weeks of the job starting.

Jobs that may be eligible for Restart include jobs that are ongoing for an average of at least 20 hours or more per week, averaged over the six months of the agreement and comply with minimum employment standards. Apprenticeships and traineeships may also be eligible for Restart.

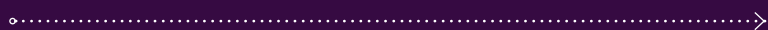
Christina's story

Watch Sheilah Cummins, CEO of Care Options, speak about the benefits of hiring Christina, a mature age employee, through the jobactive restart program. Sheilah highlights the wealth of experience and diverse background that Christina brings. She said "the skills that Christina brings, I don't know if you can train — and those are the life skills". Sheilah also highlights the enormous support that the jobactive provider supplied in the transition of Christina into the workplace.

Drew's story

Watch what mature age worker Drew did to improve her employability. Drew, aged 54, is an energetic and friendly tour guide for Wavelength Reef Cruises. To improve her employability, Drew decided to upskill by learning to drive a bus.

Rural and regional women



Rural and regional women have a lower rate of workforce participation compared to rural and regional men (56.5 per cent and 66.8 per cent respectively).

One third of Australian women live in rural and regional areas. These women play a crucial role in the growth and future regional economies and communities.

The Government continues to ensure its mainstream employment services feature a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs to help rural and regional job seekers, including women.

The Government is investing in the workforce participation of rural and regional women in a number of ways, as outlined the recent Regions 2030 report.

The Government will also lead by example in creating jobs in regional communities through its decentralisation policy. Decentralisation will benefit regional women through the creation of local jobs and career paths, increased economic diversification and the stimulation of economic growth.

Where are we?

- > As set out in the recently released Regions 2030 report, the Government is committed to building strong regional communities that businesses and families have the confidence to invest in. This commitment to invest will benefit rural and regional women in a number of ways.
- > The Regional Jobs and Investment Packages is a \$220 million investment to help diversify regional economies, stimulate economic growth and deliver sustainable employment in ten pilot regions.
- > The Building Better Regions Fund invests in infrastructure and community development projects in regional and remote Australia. Projects must create jobs, drive economic growth and support strong regional communities.
- > The 2017–18 Budget provides \$272.2 million for a new program investing amount of more than \$10 million of federal government funding, in partnership with local and state governments, into major infrastructure projects to help unlock the potential of a region.
- > The Government will lead by example in creating jobs in regional communities through its decentralisation policy.
- > In 2017, women held 37 per cent of the overall percentage of positions on Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees and the percentage of CEO positions held by women employed with RDA Committees was 45 per cent.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Continue implementation of the Regional Jobs and Investment Packages.
- > Consider the findings of the Productivity Commission's study on Transitioning Regional Economies, to be released December 2017. The study will look at the factors that influence a region's capacity to adapt to changes in circumstances.
- > Continue to implement the recommendations of the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper which sets out future approaches for growing farm profitability and boosting agriculture's contribution to economic growth, trade, innovation and productivity, both on farms and in the wider community.
- > Consider initiatives to advance the interests of Australian women through the Regional Development Australia Committees.
- > Fund the new Launch into Work program, pre-employment projects that provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready. Projects are flexible and will be designed to meet the specific needs of rural and regional women.
- > Provide \$24 million for Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships, which will support 1,200 regional and remote students to undertake science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) studies. The scholarships are for undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational education students and aim to improve access to education opportunities for regional and remote students.
- > Refocus the existing Incubator Support element of the Entrepreneurs' Programme to provide additional support for regional businesses. The measure will include additional regional incubator facilitators and provide grants to support the establishment of regional business incubators.

Women with disability

.....>

Women with disability have a considerably lower rate of workforce participation compared to men with disability (49.4 per cent and 57.8 per cent respectively).

The Government continues to ensure its mainstream employment services feature a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs to help job seekers with disability, including women. The Government has a number of initiatives which aim to rectify this imbalance. Young people with disability are benefiting from the Government's Transition to Work and Empowering YOUth initiatives. There are a further three initiatives supporting young people living with mental health issues.

Following extensive public consultations—including on proposed changes outlined in the Discussion Paper: New Disability Employment Services from 2018, released in late 2016—the Government announced changes in the 2017–18 Budget to improve the performance of Disability Employment Services (DES) to help people with disability find and keep a job.

Where are we?

- > Young people with disability are benefiting from the Government's [Transition to Work](#) and the [Empowering YOUth Initiatives](#). Approximately seven per cent (or 528) of the Transition to Work caseload is young women with disability. There are two Empowering YOUth Initiatives focused on supporting skill development of approximately 100 young people with disability per initiative. There are a further three initiatives supporting young people living with mental health issues.
- > The Government is also investing \$9 million for a new national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers, accessible through a website or over the telephone.
- > The Government announced changes in the 2017-18 Budget to improve the performance of [Disability Employment Services](#), to help people with disability find and keep a job.
- > Approximately 32 per cent of women participants remain employed three months after a period of assistance in DES. This proportion aligns with the general Disability Employment Services caseload employment rate.
- > As part of broader reforms to DES, the Government's Building Employer Demand package will engage with employers to raise the profile and create more demand from employers for people with disability. By raising awareness, the Government aims to increase the employment of people with disability, dismantle negative stereotypes and promote best practice in employing people with disability across the community.
- > [Jobactive](#) features a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs, which help job seekers with disability into work. The Employment Fund has considerable flexibility, and providers can use this on a wide range of goods and services, including training, professional services, clothing for job interviews, transport, and interpreter services.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Determine if women with disability face specific barriers to employment by undertaking a gender analysis of the services provided by [Disability Employment Services](#), [Australian Disability Enterprises](#) and the [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#).
- > Invest \$3 billion in Disability Employment Services and associated services over the next four years to help people with disability get jobs with mainstream employers.
- > Provide for a trial to carefully evaluate whether extending support through Disability Employment Services to a broader range of children with disability in the final years of their schooling can increase the number who successfully transition from school to work, without any adverse effects on their educational attainment. The trial will commence from July 2018, with the voluntary participation of up to 1,000 students with disability.
- > Through the new [Launch into Work](#) program, fund pre-employment projects that provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready. Projects are flexible and may be designed to meet the specific needs of women with disability.
- > Consider the recommendations of the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) report, [Willing to Work](#) on employment discrimination against Australians with disability.

JobAccess



JobAccess was created by the Australian Government to bring together information and resources that can drive disability employment.

JobAccess is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers.

JobAccess assistance includes financial support, workplace modifications, connections to employers, providers and peak bodies. It provides help with finding and changing jobs, creating flexible work environments, links to career advice and training courses. It also includes a range of other tools and resources for people with disability, employers and service providers.

JobAccess is here to help people with disability find and keep jobs, obtain promotions, upgrade or expand their workplace skills, and more.

JobAccess provides people with disability access to support and information on disability employment. The program offers people help to get Australian Government financial support for workplace modifications, details of other government assistance, tips on looking for and changing jobs, understanding workplace and flexible working arrangements, how to feel comfortable about disclosing a disability and talking to colleagues about a disability, links to training and development courses and how to search for current vacancies.

Job Access has a number of [videos](#) of people with disability telling their stories about their employment arrangements, flexibility in the workplace, support they have received in the workplace and being comfortable about disclosing their disability.

Young women



The workforce participation rate of young women (15–24 years) is slightly lower compared to young men (66.4 per cent and 67.4 per cent respectively).

The Government continues to ensure its mainstream employment services feature a range of interventions, activities and complementary programs to help young job seekers, including young women.

In particular, young women are benefiting from the Government's \$855 million Youth Employment Package. At the core of the package is Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare, Trial, Hire). The package also includes an expansion of the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and other measures to encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment among job seekers, including among young women.

The package builds on earlier measures to assist young people into employment. A key Government initiative is the Transition to Work service, which provides intensive pre-employment assistance to young people who have disengaged from work and study and are at risk of longterm welfare dependence. In addition, Empowering YOUTH Initiatives support new, innovative approaches from not-for-profit and non-government organisations to help young people overcome the barriers they face and move into work.

Where are we?

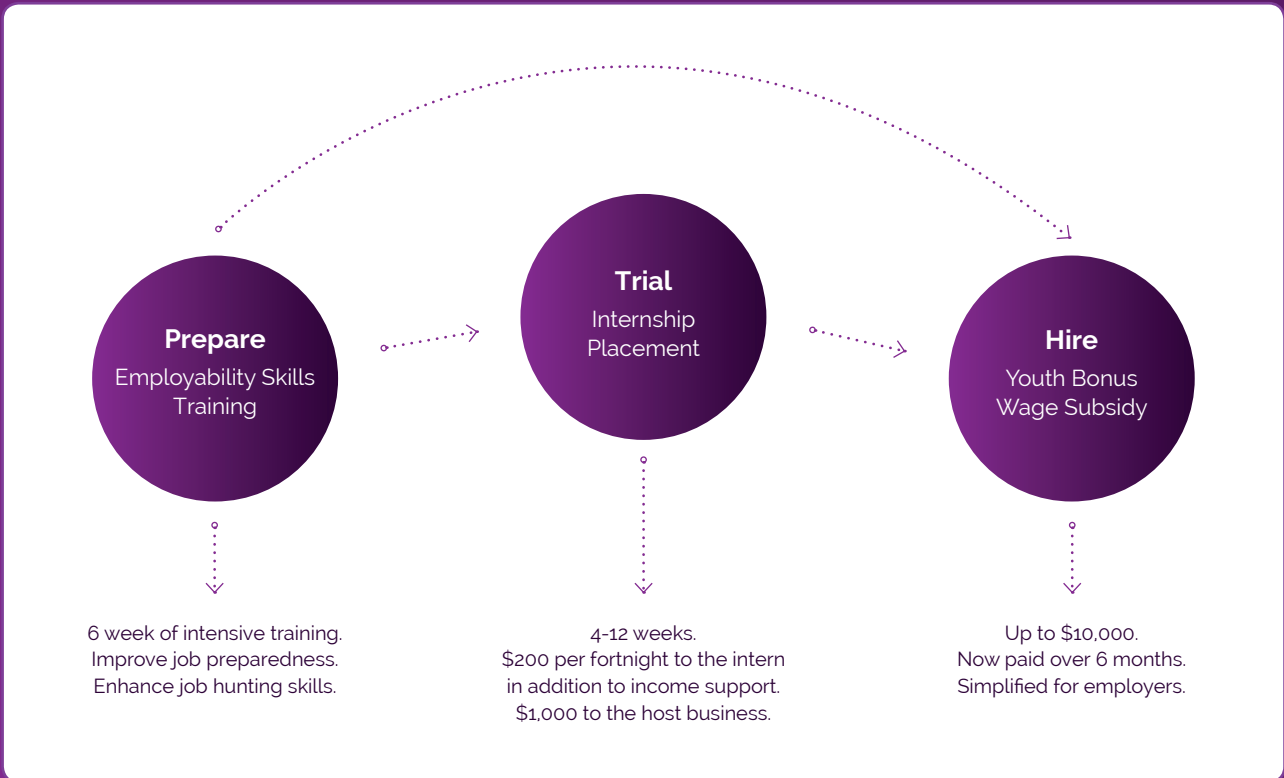
- > The Government will invest \$855 million over four years in a Youth Employment Package which will assist up to 120,000 young people to take advantage of job opportunities as the economy diversifies and transitions to broaderbased growth. This package includes an expansion of the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and other measures to encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment among job seekers, including young women..
 - > The Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare, Trial, Hire) program is the core element of the Youth Employment Package. The program is a three stage pathway to work to help give young people the employability skills that employers want, opportunities for work experience and the support to move from welfare to work.
 - > One key initiative is the Transition to Work service that provides intensive pre-employment assistance to young people who have disengaged from work and study and are at risk of long-term welfare dependence. In addition, Empowering YOUth Initiatives support new innovative approaches from not-for-profit and non-government organisations to help young people overcome the barriers they face and move into work.
 - > The Government is also investing \$96 million in the Try, Test and Learn Fund to trial new and innovative approaches to assist people with the capacity to work into stable and sustainable employment. Two of the initial priority groups for the Try, Test and Learn Fund are young parents and young carers. Both of these groups have a high proportion of young women.
- job seekers each year will be able to undertake an internship placement of 4 to 12 weeks. The internships are voluntary and provide incentives of \$1,000 upfront to a business to host an intern and a \$200 fortnightly payment to job seekers on top of their income support.
- From 1 January 2017 a Youth Bonus wage subsidy of between \$6,500 and \$10,000 (GST inclusive) is available to businesses who take on an eligible young job seeker. As part of this measure, existing wage subsidies (including those for young people, parents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, mature age workers, and the longterm unemployed) have been streamlined, making them easier for employers to access.
- > Implement the Try, Test and Learn Fund (\$96 million) to test innovative policy approaches that create a path out of the welfare system.
 - > Examine the outcomes of the initiatives under the over \$330 million Youth Employment Strategy and the \$840.3 million Youth Employment Package to monitor their impact on women.
 - > Fund through the new Launch into Work program, pre-employment projects that provide training, mentoring and work experience to assist job seekers to become work ready. Projects are flexible and may be designed to meet the specific needs of young women.
 - > Invest \$263 million to expand the ParentsNext program nationally from 1 July 2018. Each year this expansion will assist parents of young children, who may be at risk of long-term welfare dependency. While most employment services are not accessible for Parenting Payment recipients until their youngest child is six years old, ParentsNext is available earlier by supporting eligible families with young children to become job-ready and find work faster. More than 10,000 of these parents are expected to be under the age of 25 years.
 - > ParentsNext is a pre-employment program which connects eligible parents of young children to services in their local community to help them plan and prepare for employment by the time their children are at school.

Key actions for 2017–18

- > Continue to roll out Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare-Trial-Hire) from April 2017, a \$762.6 million initiative to help maximise the chances of job seekers under 25 getting a job. The program will involve three flexible stages:
 - Employability skills training to help prepare young job seekers for the workplace. The training will help young people better understand what employers expect of them and give them the skills, attitudes and behaviours required to be successful in a job.
 - From 1 April 2017, up to 30,000 young

Youth Employment Package

Young women will benefit from the Australian Government's new Youth Employment Package that will assist young people to take advantage of job opportunities



The centrepiece of the package is the [Youth Jobs PaTH \(Prepare-Trial-Hire\)](#) measure which is a flexible program designed to prepare young people, including women, for work by providing them with the employability skills and real work experience they need to get a job.

The program will encourage employers to trial a young person for a job by offering internships and financial incentives to reduce the cost of recruitment.

Young women will also benefit from the Australian Government's Encouraging Entrepreneurship measure, which is providing support to young people who wish to start their own business. This includes Exploring Being my Own Boss workshops, new Encouraging Entrepreneurship Facilitators to promote entrepreneurship and additional places in the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme.

[Transition to Work](#) is part of the \$331 million Youth Employment Strategy. The Transition to Work service provides intensive services to young people aged 15–21 years who are at risk of welfare dependency onto the pathway to sustainable employment and helps them improve their work readiness and help them get into work or education.

Seventeen-year-old Mikala Wade-Ferrell, from the North Coast of NSW, left school halfway through Year 11 so that she could start working full-time to support herself living out of home.

ETC, a Transition to Work provider, helped Mikala develop a resume and practise her interview skills. She found a full-time role as the Assistant Manager at Nourish Health food shop in Ballina and completed a Certificate III in Retail.

"I was losing interest in school but I found the Transition to Work program helped me moved into work."

[Watch the video](#) to see how the support from ETC to see how the support from ETC Transition to Work helped Mikala on her way to a better future.

[Read more stories](#) about young people who found success with Transition to Work.

[Forty Empowering YOUth Initiatives](#) are operating across Australia. Initiatives range from developing a gamification app, getting careers information from a travelling caravan, working in a social enterprise or getting hand on building skills on a practical training site. Funding is provided to a range of community organisations to deliver, innovative approaches to help young people at any stage of their transition to employment.

[20 in 2020](#) by Big hART targets 15–19 year olds on the north west coast of Tasmania, with a focus on young women, who are vulnerable to intergenerational unemployment as a result of multiple barriers, especially family violence.

The initiative engages, re-focuses, and re-builds the agency (the capacity to make strong independent decisions) of these young women through a program of specialist workshops, designed to increase their employability, enhance their pathways to social and economic participation, while at the same time developing them as change agents in their community. In this way young people gain the skills necessary for economic participation, while at the same time contributing to a cultural shift in their community.



Australian Government