



Chief Executive Women

Women leaders enabling women leaders

**Media release**

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## **‘Jobs and growth’ Economic Plan needs a focus on women’s workforce participation**

Reviewing this year’s jobs and growth focussed Federal Budget through a gender lens, it is difficult to identify any measures which directly address the gap in workforce participation, reduce barriers to women’s progression in the economy, or deliver equal financial prosperity.

As a starting point, we need more women actively engaged in the Australian workforce, which will have a substantial positive impact on the economy.

According to the latest Intergenerational Report, Australia needs more women actively engaged in the workforce if we are to lift economic growth, increase real incomes and protect our future prosperity.

Workforce participation in Australia is less than 60% for women, compared to more than 70% for men, despite the fact that women graduate and progress into tertiary education in larger numbers.

For Australia to prosper we must both create jobs and do better to make the benefit of working as attractive to women as it is for men.

With no specific measures to increase female workforce participation included in this year’s Budget, CEW will continue to urge for:

- Equal pay
- Affordable, accessible and flexible childcare
- Taking childcare costs out of the welfare sphere and into the ATO, like any other work related expense
- Closing the gap in superannuation, building on this Budget’s acknowledgement of the impact of work interruptions

Even policies that appear gender neutral may have unintended and different impacts between men and women in the way they distribute the benefits and burdens of spending and taxes. CEW believes an Economic Plan that understands the gender impact of all budget measures is important to ensure that tax, spending and social programs aimed at improving economic growth actually work for the whole economy.

CEW is calling for a rigorous analysis of the gender impact of all measures introduced or removed in the 2016 Federal Budget. Achieving gender equality is as much about economics as it is about social justice.

**About Chief Executive Women** ([www.cew.org.au](http://www.cew.org.au)) Chief Executive Women is the pre-eminent organisation representing more than 370 of Australia's most senior women from the corporate, public, academic and not-for-profit sectors. Its mission is "women leaders enabling women leaders". Through advocacy, targeted programs and scholarships, CEW works to remove the barriers to women's progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity. CEW offers innovative and substantive programs aimed at enabling women's participation and future leadership.

For further information, please contact: Lisa Jervis 0419 432 239, [lisa@cew.org.au](mailto:lisa@cew.org.au)