

JOINT POLICY STATEMENT

EMBARGOED to 11:30AM

28 April 2021

Today representatives of parents, workers and business come together with a united goal of making Australia a nation in which all women can live and work freely and safely and reach their full potential.

Achieving these changes would benefit all in our nation.

We welcome the formation of the government's Cabinet Women's Taskforce as an opportunity to make the safety and economic security of all women a priority.

The 2021/2022 Federal Budget is an opportunity to lift the economic security and safety of women by;

- Reinstating the Women's Budget Statement and ensuring:
 - It is integrated with gender-responsive budgeting during budget planning cycles;
 - It covers expenditure across all Government Departments;
 - It is prepared independently by the Parliamentary Budget Office and with input from the women's sector.

- Investing in and reforming early childhood education:
 - Work to the goal of universal access to quality early childhood education and care;
 - A first step should be to change the taper rates and per child cap to remove disincentives to increase women's workforce participation, and address supply side constraints;
 - Improved secure funding for the workforce that ensures the attraction and retention of highly skilled, better paid educators in secure employment.

- Building on the Federal Government's most recent amendments to paid parental leave by expanding the Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme to 26 weeks, flexibly shared by both parents, and providing an additional two weeks leave for each parent when care is equally shared.

- Provide new and adequate funding for domestic, family and sexual violence services, as well as funding for improved prevention of gendered violence, an accountability mechanism and law reform.



- Adequately funding aged care and addressing workforce issues including the undervaluation of the predominantly female workforce skills and pay, improved training and staff to resident ratios.

In addition to the 2021/2022 Federal Budget, the safety and economic security of all women can be strengthened by:

- Supporting paid domestic and family violence leave for all workers, with a goal to work towards 10 days.
- Ensuring sexual violence is always included in the definition of family and domestic violence, in legislation, policies and the National Action Plan.
- Continue to implement the recommendations in the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner’s Respect@Work report to address workplace sexual harassment with priority to:
 - Stronger work health and safety laws including a model regulation to make sure that employers are obliged to tackle the underlying causes of sexual harassment at work.
 - Better access to justice for workers in our workplace laws by prohibiting sexual harassment in the Fair Work Act and providing a quick, easy, new complaints process.
 - Stronger powers for the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to investigate, at her initiative, industries and workplaces which are rife with sexual harassment, and positive duties on employers to take steps to eliminate sexual harassment.

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