



WOMEN'S BUDGET STATEMENT 2017



FOREWORD

Budgets matter, and budgets matter for women. Australian women's economic security and independence; their safety; and access to health and education – all of these are dramatically affected by the choices governments make.

Choices on taxes, spending and savings are not gender neutral. For instance, the cuts to income tax delivered by the Abbott/Turnbull Governments have overwhelmingly benefited men who received three quarters of the tax breaks. Meanwhile, women will suffer more from cuts to the age pension as they are more reliant on the pension, retiring, on average, with half the superannuation men have.

Budgets reflect the values of governments because, put simply, the allocation of resources is how governments affect change. Budgets impact women and men differently, because the positions of women and men in the Australian economy and society are different. Women are usually paid less for the work they do, they continue to experience discrimination in the workforce, occupy fewer positions of power, and are responsible for far more care work.

Since last year's Budget, the Turnbull Liberal Government has reluctantly backed down on some of its cuts that would hurt women worst, but they've been clear – it's because they couldn't get them through Parliament, not because they don't believe in them.

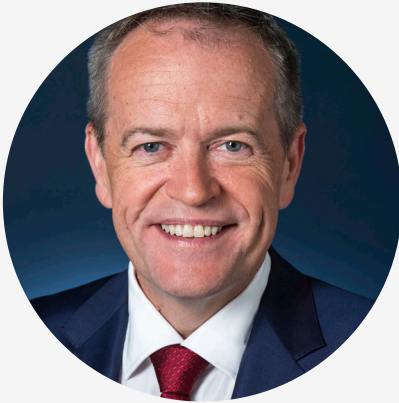
To break through the barriers to gender equality we need a concrete plan and real action. To make sure we achieve that plan, we need proper analysis of how budgets affect women.

That is why Labor is committed to producing the Women's Budget Statement, making sure budgets work for both men and women, and holding a national conversation on gender equality: Setting the Agenda. We're the party that puts equality at the centre of what we do.



Tanya Plibersek

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I firmly believe that if this Parliament did nothing else in the next number of years but **advance the march of women through the institutions of power: in workplaces, in unpaid work, in family law and economic equality**, if we did nothing else in this country as a whole in the next 15 years but install women to a place of equal treatment in our society, we will be a richer, more prosperous country with a far better prospect of a brighter future.

Bill Shorten

Leader of the Opposition



We need to banish complacency and double down on our efforts to bring about real change and a fairer, more equal society. **Without vigilance and commitment we not only risk the hard-won gains, but may actually go backwards.**

Sharon Claydon

Chair

Status of Women Caucus Committee



Through Labor, Australian women have made significant gains towards gender equity over the last 50 years. **Our journey is far from over.** Now more than ever, we must ensure our Parliament and its processes prioritise the advancement of women. That is Labor's commitment to Australian women and girls.

Emma Husar

Secretary

Status of Women Caucus Committee

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THE QUICK FACTS

- Since the Liberals came into power in 2013, **Australia has slipped from 19th to 46th place** in the Global Gender Gap Report.
- The Government can find \$50 billion to give **big business a tax cut but can't find \$400,000 to unfreeze funding** to the National Women's Alliances.
- The Government has not enacted Labor's housing affordability policies on capital gains tax and negative gearing, **failing to address the increasing housing stress women are facing**. Women only claim a third of negative gearing deductions.
- **Medicare rebates will remain frozen for three more years** – this will disproportionately impact women who are twice as likely to delay seeing their GP because of the cost.
- 2015-16 saw a **17.5 per cent increase in older women seeking help from homelessness services** – twice the rate of growth in the general population.
- **Only a third of the \$78 million in federal funding to support Indigenous children** and young people's participation in education is directed to programs targeting girls.
- **International development funding for family planning services in developing countries has fallen** from \$46 million in 2013/14, when Labor was last in government, to under \$35 million in 2014-15, to just \$17 million in 2015-16.



HOW WILL THIS YEAR'S BUDGET IMPACT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN?



A budget is a clear statement of a government's priorities. This Budget shows that the Turnbull Liberal Government can find \$50 billion to give big business a tax cut but can't find \$400,000 to unfreeze funding to the National Women's Alliances.

There is nothing in this Budget to reduce gender inequality.

This is another Liberal budget where revenue measures overall benefit men more than women. The wealthiest two per cent of Australians will receive a tax cut – three quarters of these benefits will flow to men – while at the same time, the Government has increased the Medicare Levy for everyone.

The "housing package" fails the fairness test – tinkering at the edges but avoiding the measures needed to address the housing affordability and homelessness crisis that disproportionately impacts women. The Government has failed to enact Labor's policy on generous capital gains tax or concessions on negative gearing (women only claim a third of negative gearing deductions) and the decision to open up superannuation for housing deposits is, in Malcolm Turnbull's own words, 'a thoroughly bad idea'. Particularly as women already face a superannuation gap of 47 per cent.

Medicare rebates will remain frozen for three more years – disproportionately impacting women, who visit GPs and specialists more often and are more likely to delay seeking medical care due to cost.



This Budget shows that the Turnbull Liberal Government can find \$50 billion to give big business a tax cut but can't find \$400,000 to unfreeze funding to the National Women's Alliances.

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Higher education cuts will disproportionately impact women, who will make up more than 60 per cent of new payees under the lower repayment threshold.

Another \$300 million worth of cuts to international aid will hurt women and girls around the world who are more likely to be living in poverty and lack access to political and economic power.

While Labor welcomes the Government's decision to reverse its cuts to Community Legal Centres which provide crucial legal services to domestic violence victims, the Government has still not restored its \$44 million a year in cuts to homelessness shelters under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. This is despite the fact that in 2015-16 there were 20,000 more requests for homelessness services by people dealing with domestic violence than the previous year.

After three years of arguing that change wasn't necessary, the Government has accepted the Productivity Commission's recommendation to stop alleged perpetrators in domestic violence cases personally cross-examining their victims. However, the Budget has not allocated any funding to implement this measure.

Labor welcomes a number of other small announcements by the Government in this Budget, including funding more family consultants and some additional funding for specialist domestic violence hubs in Community Legal Centres

Families are still waiting up to three years for a hearing in Family Courts due to a severe backlog in cases. Despite the last minute reprieve, Community Legal Centres are only just keeping their heads above water. More needs to be done.

Labor is glad the Turnbull Liberal Government has listened to community concerns and backed down on some of their cuts that have hurt women most. But reversing your own harmful cuts is not a plan to advance gender equality.

Hidden in the budget papers is \$170 million for an unfair, divisive plebiscite on marriage equality. The LGBTI community, and their families, don't need the harmful debate that a plebiscite will bring.

The Liberals themselves admitted in the Budget that they only reversed cuts to Paid Parental Leave, Family Tax Benefits and other "zombie measures" because they couldn't get their unfair cuts through the Senate. They've tried to slash Paid Parental Leave four times in four years and this is their ninth "welfare crackdown" since 2013.

Progress on gender equality is stalled in Australia. The gender pay gap has been stagnant for two decades; on average, one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner; and at the current rate, we won't achieve gender equality in Parliament until 2046. Since the Liberals came into power in 2013, Australia has slipped from 19th to 46th place in the Global Gender Gap Report.

Overcoming the barriers to gender equality won't happen by accident – we need concrete plans for real action. This Budget fails to deliver.



TAXATION

The Government has delivered tax breaks for the wealthy that disproportionately benefit men, while low to middle income families and vulnerable women pay more tax.

BUDGET REPAIR LEVY

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



The budget repair levy introduced in the 2014 Budget placed a 2 per cent levy people with a taxable income over \$180,000 (the top tax bracket). The Government will remove the levy from 30 June 2017. This is despite the fact that the deficit has blown out tenfold from the forecast in the 2014 Budget.

At the same time, the Government has increase the Medicare Levy for everyone.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



Women are only 26 per cent of taxpayers in the top bracket, so three quarters beneficiaries will be men.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor has said this is the wrong time to give the wealthiest 2 per cent of Australians a tax cut.

If you are a millionaire in Malcolm's Australia, you'll pay \$16,400 less tax this year.

If you're a working mum in retail earning \$65,000, you'll pay \$325 more tax in two years' time and from Sunday 2 July, you'll be \$77 a week worse off when your penalty rates are cut.

POLICY FAILURE ON NEGATIVE GEARING & CAPITAL GAINS TAX

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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In this Budget, the Government has once again failed to act on changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax. Any housing affordability package that does not deal with negative gearing and capital gains tax reform is a sham.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

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Unaffordable housing disproportionately impacts women who are more likely to earn a low income, experience pay inequity and take time away from the workforce for caring responsibilities.

Negative gearing is disproportionately used by men who claimed more than two thirds of deductions in 2014-15. In that year, 120,000 more men than women benefitted from negative gearing.

LABOR'S POSITION

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In advance of the Budget, Labor announced our next tranche of housing affordability measures. This included continued support for reforming negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions, which would improve the budget by \$37.8 billion over the medium-term.

COMPANY TAX CUTS

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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This Budget continues with the Turnbull Liberal Government's \$50 billion tax handout for big business – at a time when growth in company profits are at record highs.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

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The Government's own figures show the impact of the full \$50 billion tax cut is only an additional 1 per cent of GDP growth over twenty years. The tax cut won't support any meaningful job creation or contribute to our national prosperity.

LABOR'S POSITION

✓

Labor does not support the Government's \$50 billion tax handout for big business.



SOCIAL SERVICES

The Government has finally removed some of its' unfair 'zombie measures' from the infamous 2014 Budget, including cuts to Paid Parental Leave and Family Tax Benefits (already replaced by new FTB cuts).

But the Liberals themselves admit in the Budget that they only reversed these unfair cuts because they couldn't pass them in the Senate, not because they don't believe in them.

After four attempts in four years to slash paid parental leave and now onto their ninth "welfare crackdown" it's clear these cuts will be back as soon as the Government gets the chance.

WORKING AGE PAYMENTS

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



Malcolm Turnbull recently added a one week waiting period before single parents and young job seekers can access income support.

The Government has also frozen the income tests applying to payments for single parents, jobseekers, and students, meaning that for three years they will not keep pace with costs of living.

The thresholds that are being frozen are already very low. The Parenting Payment income threshold is \$188 per fortnight, after which the payment is reduced. For Newstart it is \$102 per fortnight.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



We know that around 94% of Parenting Payment recipients and around 50,000 young job seekers are women.

There is no policy rationale for this cruel cut, other than to save money to pass on to big business.

This will affect 204,000 Australians on the lowest incomes, meaning that the amount they can earn before their payments are reduced or removed will reduce in real terms.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor opposed these changes in the Parliament.

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There is no policy rationale for this cruel cut, other than to save money to pass on to big business.

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FAMILY TAX BENEFITS

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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This Liberal Government has tried everything they can to cut Family Tax Benefits, including holding changes to child care hostage to FTB cuts.

In March 2017 the Government did a sneaky deal with One Nation, Nick Xenophon Team, Senator Leyonjhelm and Senator Hinch to freeze the payment rates of Family Tax Benefit Parts A and B for two years from 1 July 2017.

The Budget also contains a new cut to FTB Part A by introducing a steeper income test of 30 cents for each dollar earned over \$94,316 for families with three or more children, or two children in high school.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

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The two year freeze to FTB rates means for 1.5 million Australian families and millions of children, the payments they receive will not keep pace with the cost of living. For a family with an income of \$60,000 and two children in primary school this will mean a loss of around \$440 in 2018-19.

The new cut to FTB Part A means around 100,000 families will be worse off as a result of this measure. For example a family with income of \$105,000 would be around \$1,700 worse off as they will lose access to FTB Part A completely.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor will continue to fight harsh and unfair cuts from this government.

ENERGY SUPPLEMENTS

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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The Budget confirms the Government's abolition of the Energy Supplement to all new recipients of pensions and allowances. The Energy Supplement was introduced to help income support recipients meet their increasing utilities costs.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

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Abolishing the Energy Supplement means a single pensioner will lose \$365 a year; a couple lose \$550 a year. A single parent receiving Parenting Payment Single would be worse off by \$312 per year.

There are around 2.5 million age pensioners in Australia, 1.4 million of whom are women. Recipients of the Carer Payment are predominantly female (around 69%) and around 94% of recipients of Parenting Payment Single are women. The total cut of around \$1 billion will mostly be borne by women.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor remains opposed to this measure.





RETIREMENT INCOMES

Many Australian women face an insecure retirement.

Men's superannuation balances at retirement are on average twice as large as women's. In practice this means that women, particularly single women, are at greater risk of experiencing poverty, housing stress and homelessness in retirement.

Older single women are one of the fastest growing groups of people living in poverty.

AGED PENSION AND ALLOWANCES

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



Malcolm Turnbull still wants to increase the pension age to 70 by 2035, as confirmed in this Budget. This would give Australia the oldest pension age in the world.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



Increasing the pension age will mean that around 8.4 million Australian workers will have to work until they're 70, affecting people currently in their late 40s. This will particularly impact women aged 65-69 who currently participate in the workforce at a significantly lower rate than men the same age and face barriers to mature age participation.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor has opposed all of these cuts.

SUPERANNUATION

The current superannuation gap in Australia stands at around 47 per cent, with women on average retiring with \$90,000 less than men. Women's retirement incomes suffer because they are over-represented in part-time and casual work, take more career breaks to care for children or elderly parents and experience pay inequity. The increased casualisation of work is making building retirement savings even more difficult for low income women because they may work a number of casual jobs, none of which meet the threshold for contributions to even begin.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



There is nothing new in the 2017-18 Budget to address the structural disadvantage women face in Australia's retirement income system, particularly the difficulties faced by low to middle income women.



WOMEN AND WORK

Since the Liberal Party took government in 2013, Australia has slipped from 13th place on the Global Gender Gap Index of economic participation and opportunity down to 42nd place.

Women still face a gender pay gap of 16 per cent. This means that if you're a woman working full time, you'll be paid on average \$700,000 less over the course of your work life compared to a man doing a similar job. The gap rises to \$1.5 million if you're in a management position.

Women are over-represented in lower paid industries, are a third more likely to be underemployed, and are more likely to be employed as casual workers in insecure jobs.

As more and more cases emerge of unpaid superannuation entitlements, underpayment of wages and stripping of legal entitlements, it's clear that protecting women's rights at work is crucial to advancing gender equality.

PENALTY RATES CUTS

Australian women will be disproportionately affected by the Fair Work Commission's decision to cut penalty rates. Malcolm Turnbull supports the decision of the Commission.

The penalty rates cut will be particularly damaging because of record low wage growth. Australian annual wage growth has slowed to 1.9 per cent – the weakest since data collection began in 1997. While the minimum wage has been increasing in real terms, it has been decreasing relative to median and average wages. Twenty years ago the minimum wage was 63 per cent of the median wage. Now it is 54 per cent.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



The Fair Work Commission has decided to cut Sunday and Public Holiday rates in the hospitality, retail and pharmacy industries. This will mean 700,000 people will be up to \$77 per week worse off.

The Beauty and Hairdressing Award – a highly female dominated Award - will be the next to be examined and submissions are being made to subsume the Clubs Award into the Hospitality Award, which would result in further cuts to penalty rates.

The Government has enthusiastically supported the decision of the Fair Work Commission, and has blocked Labor's attempts to stop it.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



Independent research shows that women will be disproportionately burdened by cuts to penalty rates as they are more likely to work under an award, on weekends and part-time.

Women make up 57 per cent of hospitality workers; 57 per cent of take away food workers; 62 per cent of retail workers; and 85 per cent of pharmaceutical, cosmetic and toiletry goods retail employees.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force supplementary survey shows women are more likely than men to work on Sundays in these industries with 57 per cent of the Sunday retail workforce being women, along with 51.9 per cent of the Sunday accommodation and food services workforce.

Coupled with record low wages growth, cuts to penalty rates will put more pressure on the gender pay gap.

LABOR'S POSITION



These drastic, damaging cuts can be stopped.

Labor has put forward legislation that will stop cuts to women's take-home pay now and into the future. The bill has passed the Senate, but it has been stalled by the Turnbull Government in the House of Representatives. Turnbull will not act to address the gender pay gap and he will not act to protect penalty rates.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

The Government has repeatedly refused to support domestic violence leave. Minister for Women, Michaelia Cash, has argued against it, saying that if businesses have to provide for domestic and family violence leave, they will simply choose to not employ women. There is no evidence to support this. It is estimated that at least 1.6 million Australian workers already have access to paid leave provisions in case of domestic violence.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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Despite continued campaigning from the women's sector and unions, the Turnbull Government has failed to commit to legislating any entitlement to domestic violence leave.

Finance Minister Matthias Cormann rejected calls for domestic violence leave saying, "We just believe it's another cost on our economy that will have an impact on our international competitiveness." He's obviously confused: it's domestic violence, not domestic violence leave, that costs our economy and harms our international competitiveness.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

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Violence against women and their children is costing Australia \$21.7 billion each year, with Governments carrying more than a third of the cost.

Domestic violence leave allows women escaping domestic violence to attend court appearances, look for a new place to live, and access the support of a counsellor, all while keeping their job and their economic independence.

This measure is important for maintaining income and stability in the lives of affected workers while they attempt to escape or correct a violent situation, and to reduce the financial compulsion which often keeps victims "trapped" within violent family relationships.

LABOR'S POSITION

✓

At the last election, Labor committed to provide a minimum of five days paid domestic and family violence leave in the National Employment Standards.

THE LIBERALS' RECORD

The Abbott/Turnbull Government has shown little regard for the economic security and employment conditions of working women. This Budget has done nothing to reverse backwards steps in the infamous 2014 Budget including:

- **Cutting \$3 billion** set aside under Labor to meet wage increases that would have significantly lifted salaries in the female-dominated social and community sector.
- **Axing a \$300 million fund to give pay rises to undervalued child care workers**, 97 per cent of whom are women.
- **Cutting funding to Working Women's Centres** providing free specialist employment advice for vulnerable women in the NT, SA and Queensland, leading to the likely closure of the Queensland service.
- **Removing work flexibility provisions** from Australian public services, such as provisions for domestic violence leave.
- **Offering unfair and ideological enterprise agreements** in the Australian Public Service, delivering real pay cuts across many Departments, which will disproportionately affect the pay and conditions of women.





HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Women face some of the biggest housing challenges in our community.

Too often, when women are victims of family and domestic violence, the question asked is 'why didn't she leave?' The sad answer is that there is often nowhere safe to go.

In 2015-16, nearly 106,000 people accessed specialist homelessness services because they were experiencing family and domestic violence – 92 per cent were women and children.

There is also a rapidly growing cohort of older women who are vulnerable to housing stress and homelessness because of a lifetime of economic disadvantage and the housing affordability crisis.

2015-16 saw a 17.5 per cent increase in older women seeking help from homelessness services – twice the rate of growth in the general population.

The pathways into housing stress and homelessness are different for women and men. This Government's cuts to homelessness services and failure to act effectively on housing affordability have led to growth in the number of women facing housing stress or homelessness.

NATIONAL HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS AGREEMENT

Women's experience of economic disadvantage, through pay inequity, and wealth and superannuation gaps weakens their access to affordable housing. Women are the majority of public housing tenants, Commonwealth Rent Assistance recipients and specialist homelessness services clients.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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The Government has announced that from 2018-19, the National Partnership on Affordable Housing (NPAH) and National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NAHA) will be combined into a new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA). The NHHA component related to homelessness (the former NPAH funding component) will be \$375.3 million over three years. This equates to average annual funding of \$125.1 million - little more than indexation on current NPAH funding levels.

The NHHA will be an ongoing agreement and by including former NPAH funding, will bring to an end the short-term extensions, disruption and uncertainty around homelessness funding which has been the experience since homelessness service providers since the Coalition came to office in 2013.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor welcomes the end of short-term, uncertain funding for homelessness services experienced under the Coalition.

Under the NHHA, funding to the States and Territories will be linked to outcomes in a number of priority areas including aggregate housing supply targets. This measure is very similar to the policy announced by Labor in April, but it is unclear how the NHHA will identify aggregate supply targets since Government abolished the National Housing Supply Council.

A Labor government will re-establish the National Housing Supply Council.

SAFE HOUSING FOR WOMEN

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



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This Budget fails to reverse cuts of \$44 million a year in capital funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness made in the 2014 Budget.

The Government's cuts to capital funding have resulted in a growing unmet need for short-term and emergency accommodation, especially for women escaping family and domestic violence who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



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Domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness and its effects are predominantly felt by women and children.

In 2015-16 there were about 20,000 more requests than the previous year for specialist housing services for people dealing with domestic violence and assistance for trauma.

Unmet need grew by 25% in the year after the 2014 Budget.

In 2015-16, 29,073 people were unable to access the short-term or emergency accommodation they needed.

LABOR'S POSITION



✓

In light of the impact of ongoing cuts and increasing unmet need, Labor will commit \$88 million over two years for a Safe Housing Fund to increase the availability of transitional housing options for women and children escaping family and domestic violence.

Labor's Safe Housing Fund effectively will replace two years of the cuts to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

Labor's Safe Housing Fund will also fund additional homelessness services for women at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness later in life, and for whom rapid rehousing or immediately responding to their housing problem will enable them to continue living independently.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Housing affordability is at crisis level in many areas around the country and the Government's failure to act effectively is forcing more and more women into housing stress and homelessness.

Unaffordable housing disproportionately impacts women who are more likely to be low income earners, experience pay inequity and take time away from the workforce for unpaid caring responsibilities.

This disadvantage in the housing market is seen in the distribution of tax concessions for home owners. Women are less likely than men to claim negative gearing. In 2014-15, 120,000 more men than women used negative gearing deductions. Around two thirds of negative gearing deductions are claimed by men.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



The Government's housing package has done little to address generous capital gains or concessions on negative gearing.

The Government has announced a voluntary superannuation contributions scheme (up to \$15,000/year, \$30,000 in total) for use by first home buyers.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



Voluntary contributions to superannuation are generally an option only available to relatively high income earners. Many women are not in a position to voluntarily contribute to top up their superannuation balance, let alone a home deposit.

Many women already have inadequate superannuation balances available to them at retirement age, with a retirement income gap of 47 per cent.

Accessing voluntary superannuation contributions would reduce women's superannuation balances at retirement even further.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor will oppose this measure in the Parliament.

Labor recently announced the next tranche of its housing affordability plan. Labor's plan is good for housing affordability, good for jobs, good for the Budget and good for productivity.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

There is no greater indicator of ongoing gender inequality in Australia than the continued prevalence of domestic and family violence.

Women are at least three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.

One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

And on average, one woman a week is murdered by a partner or former partner.

Labor is proud to have launched the first National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children in 2010 and welcomes the continuation of this work by the Government.

FAILURE ON CROSS-EXAMINATION REFORM

Under current Australian family law, an alleged perpetrator of domestic violence can directly cross examine their victim in court.

In 2014, the Productivity Commission recommended reform in this area in their “Access to Justice” Report, a position supported by Women’s Legal Services Australia, along with a range of other stakeholders

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



In the 2017 Budget the Turnbull Government announced that they will “soon release” proposed amendments to the Family Law Act 1975 to stop the practice of cross-examination of a victim of family violence by their abuser.

However no timeline for implementation has been released, nor has any funding been attached to the measure.

Labor welcomes this announcement, but this measure cannot be implemented without additional funding for Legal Aid, who would need to be ordered by the courts to assist unrepresented litigants.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



Victims often feel their former partners use the court system to continue the abuse, making some victims reluctant to take their cases to court.

A 2015 survey showed that of women who settled before trial, 45 per cent said that the prospect of being personally cross-examined by their abuser was a significant factor in their decision to settle.

If victims fear facing their abuser in court they may not pursue all that they may be entitled to, impacting their ability to get back on their feet. Victims of domestic violence are likely to experience financial difficulties and are more likely to receive less than 40 per cent of the property pool.

LABOR’S POSITION



Labor has committed to provide funding of \$43.2 million, to protect victims and survivors from being cross-examined by alleged perpetrators – instead providing for both parties to be legally represented.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Free legal services are accessed every day by Australian women in need – often because of domestic violence, homelessness, or financial stress.

The last-minute reversal of funding cuts is welcome, but far more stability is needed for the sector and more long-term funding needs to be considered.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



The Government has underfunded legal assistance services since coming to office in 2013. Only a small proportion of funding in the Women's Safety Package and National Plan funding was allocated to legal assistance services.

Community Legal Centres, including Women's Legal Services in nearly every capital city, had to fight tooth and nail for the reversal of a 30 per cent funding cliff due to come in on July 1, 2017.

Following extensive campaigning from the legal assistance sector, women's groups, and Labor, the Government finally reversed their own cuts 8 weeks before the funding cliff.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



Properly funding legal assistance services helps save lives. Domestic violence in Australia is at epidemic levels, and the shopfront services and helplines provided by CLCs are often the only place domestic violence victims can seek help discreetly.

However, the last minute reversal of the funding cliff has meant many CLCs have already had to lay off committed and experienced staff. The cuts also meant services had to divert resources towards three years of campaigning just to keep their doors open.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor campaigned tirelessly with the legal assistance sector to oppose cuts to CLCs and welcomes the Government's policy reversal.

At the last election, Labor made a commitment to reverse the Government's funding cuts if elected.

While in office, Labor worked to improve access to justice for all Australians, including by injecting an additional \$33.5 million into Community Legal Centres in the 2013 Budget.

FAILURE ON FAMILY COURT RESOURCING

The courts that deal with family law issues are under-resourced, with wait times of up to 3 years for a final settlement. The family law system is in crisis and the delays are having a real impact on women escaping domestic violence.

In 2015-16 almost 85,000 family law applications were filed to the Federal Circuit Court and more than 20,000 applications made to the Family Court. The Chief Justice of the Family Court, Diana Bryant, says the Family Court is so under-resourced it has no ability to provide any post-order service to check whether family orders were being complied with.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



The Turnbull Government has failed to provide any additional funding for the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court.

The Turnbull Government continues to delay on making judicial appointments - there are currently five judicial vacancies and these delays are contributing to the backlog of cases and long wait times.

The measures announced by the Government in this Budget, including funding more family consultants and some additional funding for specialist domestic violence hubs in Community Legal Centres, are welcome but do not go far enough to address the depth of the problem.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



The courts need to be adequately resourced to ensure that victims of family violence, the majority of whom are women, get the assistance they need. As the number and complexity of cases before the courts has increased resourcing needs to increase also.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor is examining the proposed establishment of Parenting Management Hearings announced in the Budget, to determine whether they are an appropriate forum to resolve family disputes without a court hearing.

Labor took to a commitment to the last Federal Election to appoint additional Federal Circuit Court judges to Brisbane and Parramatta; to appoint a permanent Federal Circuit Court judge to Wollongong; and to appoint an additional Family Court judge in Brisbane.

FAILURE ON NON-CONSENSUAL SHARING OF IMAGES

The non-consensual sharing of intimate images is becoming increasingly prevalent as a form of violence against women. The law has failed to keep pace with new ways that technology is being used to perpetrate violence. Gaps in existing laws means there are limitations on how law enforcement agencies can deal with this form of abuse.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



The Turnbull Government continues to delay criminalising the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Instead, the Government has announced a public consultation on a proposed civil penalties regime.

The Government broke a promise to provide \$10 million in funding to the development of a national online reporting tool to be managed by the new eSafety Commissioner, reducing funding to \$4.8 million. The balance of this funding is now going to research and educational resources that focus on “attitudes and behaviours about pornography” which raises concerns about victim-blaming rather than holding perpetrators accountable.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



Women are more likely than men to be victims of non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Research has recently revealed that 1 in 5 people in Australia suffer from image-based abuse, with this horrible crime affecting one in two Indigenous Australians and one in two people with a disability.

These practices are often perpetrated by ex-partners who distribute images as a form of family violence. The Government’s failure to criminalise revenge porn and focus on victims’ “attitudes and behaviours” sends the wrong message to Australian women that victims are responsible for their own harassment and that perpetrators will not be held accountable.

LABOR’S POSITION



Labor recognises that non-consensual sharing of intimate images should be a crime. That’s why Labor took to the 2016 Election a policy to criminalise non-consensual sharing of intimate images within 100 days of Government.

This built on the efforts of Labor’s Tim Watts and Terri Butler who in 2015, and again in 2016, introduced a Private Members Bill to Parliament to criminalise non-consensual sharing of intimate images throughout Australia.

1800RESPECT

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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The Government has only promised to fund 1800RESPECT until 2019, leaving the service without funding commitment for the last three years of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

♀

1800RESPECT provides counselling to almost 60,000 Australians a year – the vast majority of its clients are women.

With increased awareness and reporting of domestic violence more women are coming forward to seek support for the trauma.

Since 1800RESPECT was established, the number of calls answered has increased substantially (from 11,603 in the 2010 to 59,578 calls in 2016).

However, funding for specialised trauma counsellors has not matched the increase in calls.

Instead of hiring additional trauma counsellors with the Women's Safety Package funding, the Turnbull Government invested \$4.9 million into the controversial triage system which has been accused of diverting callers away from counselling. The remaining \$85,000 was provided to KPMG to review the 1800RESPECT operating model.

LABOR'S POSITION



In 2016 Labor took a policy to the election to demonstrate our commitment to fund the three major national organisations and services formed under the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children - for the plan's entire period (1800RESPECT, ANROWS and Our WATCH). This included \$40.24m over four years to fund the continued provision of the 1800 RESPECT counselling service by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia.

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1800RESPECT provides counselling to almost 60,000 Australians a year – the vast majority of clients are women.

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LABOR'S COMMITMENT TO PREVENTING AND ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In advance of the 2016 election, Labor committed to:

- **investing \$42.9 million in frontline legal services** to ensure women threatened by violence are not alone in going through the legal system;
- **investing \$4.5 million in Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS)** to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children experiencing family violence;
- **providing an initial \$15 million in grants** to help people affected by family violence stay safe in their own homes and in their communities;
- **investing \$8.4 million** into improving perpetrator accountability;
- **including five days paid Domestic Violence Leave** (and unpaid leave for casuals) in the National Employment Standards;
- **addressing family violence against indigenous people**, as part of our new justice target under the Closing the Gap strategy;
- **providing funding certainty** to ANROWS, 1800RESPECT and Our WATCH for the term of the National Plans;
- **providing funding of \$88 million** in our Safe Housing for Women policy;
- **an annual statement to the Parliament** on progress in eliminating family and domestic violence;
- **providing \$43.2 million to protect victims and survivors** from being cross-examined by alleged perpetrators;
- **prohibiting non-consensual sharing of intimate images and recordings**, within the first 100 days of a Shorten Labor government;
- **working within COAG** to create specific offences prohibiting the covert installation of spying apps on smartphones;
- **providing \$3.8 million for pilot programs** in relation to family and domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- **creating a new temporary visa** to for victims of family violence who are secondary holders of temporary visas, to provide protection for people on temporary visas facing family and domestic violence.



HEALTH

Women and men have different health needs and interact with the healthcare system differently. Women are more likely to see a GP – visiting the GP twice as often as men. Women are also more likely to see a specialist.

Cost factors also influence women's access to health care more than for men. Women are twice as likely to have to delay seeing their GP or filling a script because of the expense. Almost 50 per cent of women who had to put off seeing a specialist said it was due to cost.

MEDICARE

The Budget demonstrates that when it comes to Medicare and women's health the Liberals have not learned a thing - Malcolm Turnbull's Medicare freeze remains in place for years to come.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

i

The Budget confirms that most Medicare items will remain frozen for at least as long as Tony Abbott's original freeze (2014-2018):

- GP consultations – freeze remains until July 2018
- Specialist consultations – freeze remains until July 2018
- Specialist procedures – freeze remains until July 2019
- Allied health services – freeze remains until July 2019

The failure to immediately drop the freeze will continue to increase the cost of vital services for women and families – like oncology treatment, obstetric services, paediatric treatment, and allied health services like psychology, speech therapy and physiotherapy.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

♀

With Medicare rebates frozen for up to three more years, the barriers to care for women and families will only get higher. Under the Turnbull Government, average out-of-pocket costs have skyrocketed to \$33 for a GP visit and \$70 for a specialist consultation.

The NSW President of the Australian Medical Association has confirmed, the Government's Budget will do little to help: "The small and incremental increases to [Medicare] hardly amount to what you could call a removal of the freeze ... At this rate it will be many years before patients see an appreciable difference in out-of-pocket costs."

When women cannot afford basic health care, they are likely to become sicker and present to a public hospital emergency department. But the Government's Budget also locks in the status quo on hospital funding, meaning that our hospitals will continue to struggle under rising demand.

LABOR'S POSITION



At the last election, Labor committed to re-index Medicare rebates at the first opportunity (1 January 2017). The Government should have followed our lead and dropped the entire Medicare freeze on 1 July 2017. This was the test for Medicare for this year's Budget and the government failed comprehensively.

At the last election, Labor also committed \$8 million to life-saving ovarian cancer research and \$7 million to support Australians with breast cancer – particularly women with secondary breast cancer. We are deeply disappointed that the Government has not matched these commitments.

Over the last three years, Labor has campaigned tirelessly with women and health providers against other Government cuts – including cuts to Medicare bulk billing incentives for vital tests and scans, increases to co-payments for PBS medicines, and cuts to the Medicare Safety Nets. Labor also committed to reverse these cuts at the last election. The Government has dropped these changes because of the campaign Labor ran against them.

When Labor was last in government, we added RU486 to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme so women have more choice and control of their reproductive rights.

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The Budget demonstrates that when it comes to Medicare and women's health the Liberals have not learned a thing.

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EDUCATION

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Labor invests in education because we believe there's nothing better for our society than well educated, well trained Australians in secure jobs.

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HIGHER EDUCATION

Since 1987, women have been the majority of students at Australian universities. Today, more than 55.7 per cent of students in Australia's universities are women.

While women are succeeding in higher education, pay inequity and time spent out of the work force for caring responsibilities, mean women are often slower repaying their HELP debts and accumulate more interest – ultimately paying a higher cost for their degrees.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



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Since coming to office in 2013, the Liberals have tried desperately to cut university funding and introduce higher fees.

The latest package of higher education reform continues the Liberals attack on students and our universities.

In this Budget, the Liberals are:

- slashing \$3.8 billion from our universities;
- hitting students with a fee hike of 7.5 per cent;
- making students pay off their larger HELP debts quicker, by lowering the repayment threshold to \$42,000;
- forcing Permanent Residents and New Zealanders on to high-cost full-fee degrees; and
- cutting the number of Commonwealth supported places in postgraduate courses.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



♀

Under the Liberal's plan, Australians will be required to pay back their fees once they start earning \$42,000 – just 20 per cent above the minimum wage. Analysis shows women will represent more than 60 per cent of the new payers.

It means that when young women enter the workforce, at a time when they're trying to start saving for a house or thinking about starting a family, they'll now be hit with HELP re-payments.

The change will also reduce the incomes of women who chose to work part-time later in their careers to take on care responsibilities and who are still paying off HELP debts.

LABOR'S POSITION



✓

We shouldn't be making it harder to get a university education and saddling young Australians with bigger debts. That's why we oppose the Government's plan for cuts to university funding, higher student fees, changes to HELP re-payments, and the imposition of full-fee places for New Zealanders and Permanent Residents.

CHILD CARE CHANGES

Women's workforce participation lags men by around 13 percentage points, and Australian women have lower participation rates than similar countries such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Denmark.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

*i*

This Budget has done nothing to address the shortcomings of the Government's child care package.

The Government's child care package still reduces access to early education for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and will have a far-reaching impact on life outcomes.

Overall, one in three families will be worse off, including over 70,000 families on incomes under \$65,000. The most vulnerable and disadvantaged children will have their access cut in half.

The changes will also introduce a complex new activity test that will make it harder for working women – particularly those employed part time and casually – to access reliable subsidised child care.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

♀

The child care changes also fail to show any credible impact on women's workforce participation and by introducing an activity test will make it harder for many women to participate in the workforce. Part time workers, casual workers and women who work variable hours will face a new level of uncertainty around their access to subsidised care.

Australia's most disadvantaged children still miss out, which will have long term consequences and increase the risk of intergenerational welfare dependency.

LABOR'S POSITION

✓

Labor has a long history of expanding and improving federal early childhood education and care programs: from community preschool programs under Gough Whitlam to more recent increases in the Child Care Rebate and the establishment of Universal Access to kindergarten and preschool.

These changes have enabled women to increase their workforce participation and helped narrow the gender pay gap. Labor understands the long-term social and economic benefits of continuing to invest in early education and care.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PRESCHOOL

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

*i*

The Government has again failed to provide funding certainty for Universal Access to kindergarten and preschool, providing only a single year extension. The Budget has also failed to outline the next steps in expanding quality play-based early education to three year olds.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

♀

Without ongoing funding for preschool and kindergarten, hours will be cut, fees will rise, and it will be more difficult for women – who still bear the majority of child care responsibilities in Australia – to balance work and family.

LABOR'S POSITION

✓

Labor introduced federal funding for preschool in 2009 with the goal of all children receiving 15 hours of quality early education in the year before school.

Because of Labor's investment, kindergarten and preschool enrolments have climbed from 69.5 per cent nationally in 2008 to 96.5 per cent in 2015.

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Without ongoing funding for
preschool and kindergarten, hours
will be cut, fees will rise...
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INDIGENOUS WOMEN

This Budget demonstrates that the Turnbull Government has no agenda in Indigenous affairs. The failure to reverse severe funding cuts from the 2014 Budget is weakening our nation's ability to deal with declining outcomes for Indigenous women across a range of areas.

Indigenous women have a life expectancy 9.5 years shorter than non-indigenous women and a maternal death rate almost three times higher.

They are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised because of domestic violence and are significantly more likely to be incarcerated – one in five Indigenous women has been formally charged by police.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGAL SERVICES

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

i

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLSs) – which exist so that Aboriginal Legal Services do not face the conflict of representing both abuser and victim in domestic violence cases – were entirely forgotten in the reversal of cuts to Community Legal Centres.

Since 2014, FVPLSs have to compete for tenders through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. This has undermined funding security as services has moved onto short term funding agreements which expire next year.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

♀

FVPLSs are often located in remote areas and are the only place indigenous women can turn.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) often are compelled to represent partners of accused of abuse, leaving many women unrepresented.

FVPLSs report that up to 30 per cent of women contacting the services have to be turned away because they don't have the capacity to support them.

Funding uncertainty is placing strain on FVPLSs, affecting the women they serve.

LABOR'S POSITION

✓

At last election, Labor committed an additional \$4.5 million for FVPLSs.

PROGRAMS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Right now, less than six out of ten Indigenous female students complete secondary school compared to eight out of ten non-Indigenous students.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

i

Less than a fifth of the \$73 million in federal funding to support Indigenous children and youth participate in education is directed to programs targeting girls. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys receive 81 per cent of federal government education grants despite alarming trends in the growing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander prison and recidivism rates for female youth.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor committed to support the work of the Stars Foundation to empower Indigenous girls and young women at risk of disengaging from education.

Labor's support would have provided 7,155 student places through programs in the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria.



JUSTICE AND INCARCERATION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women represent two per cent of the Australian population but make up 34 per cent of the female prison population and we know this is a rising trend.

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

i

In this Budget, the Government has again failed to recognise the need for a national set of justice targets agreed by COAG to address the drastic escalation of domestic and family violence. This is a national issue requiring national solutions, and this government is washing its hands of the issue.

There has been a failure to recognise that more is invested by Governments across Australia in keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women inside prisons, than there is in keeping them out of prison. The Red Cross estimates that it costs \$292 per prisoner per day. Justice reinvestment needs to be a central part of the logic to address the over-incarceration of Indigenous women.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor committed that the first meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) convened under a Shorten Labor Government will consider priorities for justice targets for inclusion in the Closing the Gap framework.



WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

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Labor has more women on the frontbench than the Liberals have in the House of Representatives.

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WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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The Government has frozen funding for four years to the National Women's Alliances. This means real cut of around \$400,000 across the five Alliances over four years.

A Government commissioned KPMG review of the Alliances said: "A lack of funding was... identified as a barrier that limits the Alliances' abilities to effectively engage and communicate with members and the wider public."

The Government has also underspent last year's Women's Leadership and Development Strategy Grants – the main source of Federal Government funding for groups working to promote gender equality – by \$800,000 (21 per cent of annual funding).

IMPACT ON WOMEN

♀

The National Women's Alliances bring together a wide range of women and women's organisations to make sure that women's issues and a diversity of voices are represented in decision making and policy outcomes.

Freezing funding to these organisations reduces awareness of issues affecting women in a Government where women are already poorly represented.

LABOR'S POSITION

✓

At the last election Labor committed \$5.2 million in funding over three years for the continuation of the work of six National Women's Alliances, including a re-established Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance. This funding includes increases for CPI.

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Freezing funding to these organisations reduces awareness of issues affecting women in a Government where women are already poorly represented.

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Around the world, women are more likely to experience the burden of poverty than men. Women in developing countries are more vulnerable than men to the dangers of climate change. And in protracted food security crises and situations of chronic hunger, women are more likely to be affected than men. This is because around the world, women still lack access to economic resources and political power and face gender-based discrimination.

CUTS TO FOREIGN AID

MEASURE DESCRIPTION



Since 2013, the Abbott/Turnbull Government has cut a massive \$11.3 billion from foreign aid. In this Budget, they've cut another \$300 million.

This Budget reflects the Liberals' diminished sense of international responsibility and takes international aid to its lowest level on record.

The Turnbull Government has weakened Australia's foreign aid spending to just 22 cents for every \$100 of our national income. This is our lowest level ever of international development assistance and it is on an ever diminishing trajectory to go even lower.

The Budget reaffirms that international development is not a priority for the Turnbull Government.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



While the Minister for Foreign Affairs has pledged to target gender equality and women's empowerment through Australia's aid program, this focus cannot make up for the massive cuts to aid being delivered in our region.

There is no question that continued cuts to the aid program will disproportionately impact women and children in developing countries in our region, who already experience a greater burden of poverty and disadvantage.

This Government has pledged to support women's empowerment through the aid program while stripping away aid funding. Deep cuts to aid only serve to amplify inequality in our region.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor opposes these unjust cuts and believes Australia's aid program should support expanded opportunities for women across the world.

Labor's track record in government is solid. We almost doubled the aid budget between 2007 and 2013, and had budgeted to reach the previously bipartisan target for aid funding of 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) by this 2017-18 Budget.

International development priorities must align with the UN 2030 Agenda to which Australia has committed. Labor believes that as a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals, Australia is required to provide more not less as a member of the global community.

INACTION ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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Since Labor made the 2012 landmark decision to double aid funding for family planning services in developing countries to \$50 million annually by 2016, this funding has been relentlessly cut by the Liberals.

Figures provided by NSW Family Planning show a reduction from \$46 million in 2013-14, when Labor was last in government, to under \$35 million in 2014-15 and down to \$17 million in 2015-16.

Two thirds of global need for family planning and reproductive health services lies within our region. Australia's international development priority must be to empower women and girls in our region.

IMPACT ON WOMEN



This significant reduction in aid funding for family planning services comes at a time when aid organisations are struggling due to US foreign assistance being blocked. The Trump Administration's reimposition of the "Global Gag Rule" is expected to drastically reduce the availability of voluntary family planning services, HIV tests and maternal health programs in developing countries.

Properly funding family planning services is crucial to prevent maternal deaths, unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions. At a time when many countries around the world are stepping up to fill the gap in reproductive health funding, the Australian Government continues to cut funding.

LABOR'S POSITION



Labor supports a women's right to decide. We are committed to honouring Australia's responsibility to do more for women in developing countries.

Labor knows that family planning is a critical way to address poverty and improve the lives of women and their children.

LABOR'S LEGACY

Advancing women's rights



- Labor is proud to have a rich legacy of advancing women's rights – gender equality is at the centre of the Labor mission.
- Gough Whitlam was the first Prime Minister to promise Australian women that they could participate fully in our society and economy, proclaiming 'your biology should not be a barrier'.
- The Whitlam Government introduced the first equal opportunity policies in education, training and employment programs.
- In his first week in power, Gough Whitlam removed the sales tax on the contraceptive pill and made it available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- Labor opened the first women's refuges and women's health centres and was the first party to fund rape crisis centres in the 1970s.
- We ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1975.
- Under Gough Whitlam, the adult minimum wage was extended to women for the first time.
- Labor reopened the Equal Pay Case that made half a million women eligible for full pay – women's wages rose by 30 per cent.
- We've fought for an industrial relations system that protects minimum standards for vulnerable workers – the majority of whom are women.
- We enacted the Sex Discrimination Act in 1984 and the Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunities in Employment) Act in 1986.
- Labor is also committed to the equal representation of women in Parliament. We have set targets and stuck to them. That's why there are twice as many Labor women as Liberal women in House of Representatives. There are more women on our frontbench than the Liberals have in the entire House of Representatives.
- We're committed to ensuring all women have a voice in our Parliament. The first Indigenous women to serve in the Senate and House of Representatives are both Labor women.

OUR RECORD IN GOVERNMENT

Delivering for Australian women



- When Labor was last in government we set a strong record on gender equality.
- Labor introduced Australia's first Paid Parental Leave scheme, benefiting over 280,000 working parents and giving many people access to paid parental leave for the first time.
- Labor developed the first National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.
- Labor introduced the National Women's Health Policy in 2010 and improved women's health through additional funding for breast cancer prevention and care and the first ever National Perinatal Depression Initiative.
- We added RU486 to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme so women have more choice and control of their reproductive rights.
- Labor overturned the Howard Government's 'global gag rule' to provide family planning and reproductive rights funding to women in developing countries.
- We appointed Australia's first Global Ambassador for Women and Girls to promote gender equality on the world stage.
- Labor set a target for 40 per cent representation of women on Government boards and we hit that target two years ahead of schedule in 2013.
- Labor also took great steps to improve gender equality in the workforce and promote women's economic security.
- We introduced the Fair Work Act, strengthening equal remuneration provisions and enabling the historic Social and Community Pay Equity case to be brought forward.
- We committed \$3 billion to meet wage increases for the female dominated social and community sector workers.
- \$300 million to the Early Years Quality Fund to retain a highly qualified child care workforce – raising the value of care work in Australian society.
- We also established the Pay Equity Unit in the Fair Work Commission and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency to promote equal pay and women's workforce participation.

SETTING THE AGENDA

A comprehensive blueprint for gender equity

Labor is proud of our achievements in advancing gender equality, but we know that much remains to be done to make sure women can benefit from full and equal participation in Australian life.

We'll call out Government policies that harm women. But to break through the barriers to gender equality, we need a concrete plan for real action on gender equality.

That's why in 2017, Labor's Status of Women Committee will be holding a national conversation to shape Labor's comprehensive blueprint for gender equality. We want you to be part of the conversation.

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Setting the agenda

LABOR'S NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON GENDER EQUITY

