



Media Release | 6 October 2020

Women – the Budget’s forgotten people

Quotes from Gerard Dwyer, National Secretary SDA the union for retail, fast food, warehouse and online retail workers

The Morrison government seems to have forgotten that women have suffered disproportionately under the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tonight’s budget is notable for its failure to recognise this fact.

It is a blue budget for a pink recession.

More women than men are casuals and therefore not eligible for JobKeeper, more women than men work in retail, especially in fashion, furnishings and homewares – all sectors hardest hit by closures and reductions in trade.

200,000 women who work in accommodation, food services and retail trade sectors missed out on JobKeeper due its design flaws around casual employees.

Women workers are more likely than their male counterparts to have put their lives and health at risk while performing essential services during the pandemic because they are disproportionately represented in health care, aged care, child care and retail.

Absent from tonight’s budget were any initiatives to improve the affordability of aged care or to enhance family and domestic violence services, for example.

The number of women on JobSeeker or Youth Allowance has jumped 124 percent over the past 12 months, surging past their male counterparts in August.

Women workers suffered most during the worst of the recession, now they are being left behind and the budget ignores their plight.

And what does the budget have to offer?

A Women’s Economic Security Statement totalling \$240 million, little more than one third of one percent (0.038%) of the total budget deficit.

It is nothing more than an insult to the tens of thousands of women who have suffered most from the COVID-19 recession and borne more than their share of the job losses and subsequent insecurity not to mention the disproportionate risks to their health and safety.

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