

GENDER EQUALITY BUDGET STATEMENT

VICTORIAN BUDGET 19/20



This is the Andrews Labor Government's third Gender Equality Budget Statement.

And as one of the many reforms included in **Safe and Strong** – our state's first Gender Equality Strategy – it helps ensure gender equality is given the priority it deserves.

It also demonstrates that, from education to employment, healthcare to justice, advancing gender equality is at the heart of our Government's agenda.

These are not mere words.

Because across our Government – and across our state – our commitment is illustrated through our nation-leading reform and action.

But we know when it comes to driving real cultural change, we need long-term commitment.

It's why the **Victorian Budget 2019/20** continues our existing efforts and investments, with:

- ▶ \$976 million to ensure more women achieve economic security
- ▶ \$185 million in funding to continue working to end family violence
- ▶ \$115 million to support and promote women's participation in sport, in addition to investments in the Local Sports Grants initiative
- ▶ \$98.8 million for initiatives addressing maternal and reproductive health, as well as ongoing advocacy work in our rural communities

These investments are in addition to our broader policies and programs dedicated to addressing disadvantage and discrimination.

Because we know: a better future for our state depends upon a better, more equal future for Victorian women.

Gabrielle Williams
Minister for Women
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence

ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

In four years, we've taken significant steps towards achieving gender equality.

In addition to establishing our state's first Gender Equality Strategy, we have also ensured Respectful Relationships education is being taught in schools across our state.

Women's participation in the workforce is up, and since 2013, the gender pay gap in the Victorian public service has almost halved.

We have supported more women into local government through the Victorian Local Governance Association's Local Women Leading Change campaign and continued the Joan Kirner Young and Emerging Women Leaders Program, with 27 women entering the program's second year.

We've made record investments in women's sport, ensuring women have the facilities and opportunities they deserve.

And we've also delivered real investments in women's health and wellbeing, which has included putting a focus on women's and LGBTI Victorians' mental health, as well as ensuring increased access to sexual and reproductive health.

This year's Budget builds on that momentum. That includes support to ensure women get the care they need while having a baby, and a boost to support for mothers with a dedicated 24-hour help line for sleep and settling issues.

We have also made the essential step of providing free tampons and pads in all government schools to ensure our young women always have access to these necessary items.

When we came to government, we promised to undertake our nation's first Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Four years on, we have implemented more than half of the Commission's recommendations, investing more than \$2.7 billion over the past four years to keep women and children safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is also backing women's leadership, with a commitment that at least half of all new appointments to courts and government boards must be women.

As a result, women's membership on paid government boards has increased from 40 per cent in March 2015 to 54 per cent in April 2019.

Women's representation as executives in the public sector has increased from 37.4 per cent in June 2014 to 45 per cent in June 2018.

And – for the first time in Victoria's history – half the members of the Victorian Cabinet are women and 48 per cent of Government members are women.

At the same time, we know there's a long way to go.

It's why this year's Budget continues our work, investing in the services and supports we need to address gender inequality.



ACHIEVING ECONOMIC SECURITY

Increasing economic security is an integral part of achieving equality.

But right now, women are still earning on average \$231 less a week than men.

This Government is determined to address the gender pay gap – and we've already made some progress.

In March 2019, the female participation rate was 60.8 per cent, up from 58.5 per cent in June 2014.

At the same time, the female unemployment rate is the equal lowest it has ever been, at 4.8 per cent in March 2019.

However, there is still more to be done.

The percentage of women in the labour force who are either unemployed or underemployed in March 2019 was 15.4 per cent – more than 4 percentage points higher than the rate for men.

Increasing economic security is an integral part of achieving equality. This Government is determined to address the gender pay gap

It's why, in order to improve economic security for women, this year's Budget includes:

- ▶ \$882 million to ensure every three-year-old has access to at least five hours per week of subsidised kinder by 2022 – increasing to 15 hours per week over the next decade. The rollout will commence in 21 communities in regional and rural Victoria, assisting more women with the cost of kinder and returning to the workforce
- ▶ \$57 million to ensure our state's TAFEs are better than they have ever been, with upgraded and redeveloped facilities across Victoria ensuring more women are able to access quality training
- ▶ \$28.5 million to add Certificate III/Diploma of Early Childhood to the list of Free TAFE courses – building on the existing 30 priority TAFE courses and 20 pre-apprenticeship courses – to reduce financial barriers for students, encourage enrolment and support the rollout of universal three-year-old kinder
- ▶ \$8.8 million to expand JobsBank and the Jobs Victoria Employment Network, to help even more jobseekers find work with additional support
- ▶ Offering payroll tax exemptions to encourage employers to offer parental leave to both mothers and fathers



SAFE AND FREE FROM VIOLENCE

Family violence is our nation's number one law and order issue.

It's the reason the Andrews Labor Government committed to launching Australia's first ever Royal Commission into Family Violence.

And it's the reason we will implement every single one of the Commission's 227 recommendations, with more than half already complete.

The *Victorian Budget 2019/20* builds on this work, investing:

- ▶ \$85 million to ensure perpetrators are held to account, including through behavioural change programs and intensive engagement of perpetrators with complex needs
- ▶ \$28.7 million for the Dhelk Dja: the Aboriginal Family Violence Agreement for more frontline Aboriginal family violence services, including \$9.9 million for the operation of three Orange Door access points
- ▶ \$23.9 million to better respond and meet the needs of victim survivors in emergency accommodation and refuges, through expanded case management
- ▶ \$20.9 million to make sure victim survivors of family violence and sexual assault have the support they need to rebuild their lives, including specialised services for Aboriginal Victorians and women with disability
- ▶ \$8.5 million to strengthen family violence perpetrator responses for cohorts from diverse backgrounds with complex needs
- ▶ \$5.7 million to strengthen family violence responses for people with a disability through Orange Doors as well as additional support to LGBTI victim survivors through the Rainbow Tick accreditation team
- ▶ \$5.5 million for 10 full-time specialist family violence financial counsellors to help combat financial abuse and ensure women have the advice and information they need to keep themselves and their children safe
- ▶ \$2.3 million for the Koori Women's Place to provide culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal women and children escaping family violence
- ▶ \$1.8 million to support and further develop the Victorian Family Violence database to strengthen and support reporting, research and analysis

And because we're determined to continue our support for the women and men who support victim survivors, this year's Budget also includes \$3.1 million to continue the expansion of the family violence workforce.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Andrews Labor Government believes every Victorian should be able to rely on quality care, close to home.

This year's Budget invests in improving health and wellbeing with a range of services and supports, including:

- ▶ \$64.4 million to improve nurse to patient ratios and deliver an extra 542 nurses and midwives across our state, ensuring Victorian patients – including new mums – are getting the care they deserve
- ▶ \$20.7 million to make tampons and pads free and available in all government schools
- ▶ \$7.2 million to implement a dedicated maternal and child 24-hour phone line with specialists in sleep and settling issues
- ▶ \$6 million towards reproductive health including through:
 - ▶ Planning for public IVF services that will, once established, provide bulk-billed and subsidised treatments for up to 4 000 Victorians a year
 - ▶ Continued funding for the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority, which provides critical support for families accessing assisted reproductive services
- ▶ \$500 000 to support the Country Women's Association with its ongoing advocacy on the health and wellbeing of women living in our rural communities

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S SPORT

Building on our record investments in encouraging and supporting women's participation in sport, the *Victorian Budget 2019/20* provides:

- ▶ \$83 million for the upgrade of the State Basketball Centre and planning for the Knox Arena, to cater for women's and mixed gender leagues
- ▶ \$13.5 million for the Community Cricket Program, to deliver targeted improvements to women's sporting venues
- ▶ \$8 million for the Shooting Sports Facilities Program, which will continue to improve facilities across Victoria, while providing greater opportunities for women to participate at all levels
- ▶ \$7.4 million for motor sports including \$300 000 to expand the Dare To Be Different program, which will encourage more women and girls to get involved in the sport
- ▶ \$2.8 million to employ four netball development officers. Recognising the huge popularity of netball among women and girls, this funding will go towards promoting the game and providing support to those volunteers who are running grassroots competitions around the state
- ▶ \$160 000 to establish golf scholarships, including to increase women's participation in the game
- ▶ Investments in the Local Sports Grants initiative, with funding to upgrade community sporting infrastructure, including at least 13 women's changerooms and facilities

