



Australian Government

Department of Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Office for Women

Women's Budget Highlights 2013-14



a strong and fair society for *all Australians*

May 2013

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The document must be attributed as the **Women's Budget Highlights 2013-14**

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Foreword

This year's Budget is about a stronger, smarter, fairer Australia.

Our plan, as it has always been, is to make the necessary investments in Australia's future to ensure that none of our people are left behind.

The Gillard Government has always had a strong commitment to gender equality, evident across a wide range of policies. This year's Budget builds on our record by having the future of women at the core of our biggest reforms and our largest investments.

Our nation cannot afford to fail our girls and boys, or our economy, by being unable to attract the high wage, high skill jobs of the future. Better school funding and school improvements are significant highlights of the Government's achievements and investments this year.

Ensuring the opportunities and benefits that come with a high quality education are equally available to young women and men from all backgrounds, abilities and locations is an important component of achieving gender equality.

We are dedicated to making the nation smarter, just as we are dedicated to making our nation fairer.

DisabilityCare Australia, the national disability insurance scheme, fixes an unfair and inefficient system that currently impacts many Australians with a significant and permanent disability. By taking a lifelong approach to disability, DisabilityCare will ensure women with disabilities are provided with choice and control of the support they receive, to better address their specific requirements, providing opportunities for greater independence and quality of life.

Along with providing so many opportunities, this year's Budget has also presented major challenges.

We have bounced back from the Global Financial Crisis better than any major advanced economy.

Against a backdrop of global financial instability, and huge reductions in revenue growth due to international pressures, we must fund new initiatives by making savings.

This year, more than ever, our Budget focuses on nation-building. Other measures are more modest, but are clearly and carefully designed to build on the significant and enduring reforms made during the course of this Government's term.

We continue to deliver better outcomes for women, and to advance gender equality between women and men.

We continue to govern for all Australians, to strengthen the economy and to spread the benefits to all.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Gillard".

The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister of Australia



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Collins".

The Hon Julie Collins MP
Minister for Community Services
Minister for the Status of Women

Introduction

All Australian Government Ministers and Departments share a responsibility for delivering equality for women, and for considering the needs of different women, particularly those who may face multiple barriers to full participation in work and community life.

In this context, all measures announced in the 2013-14 Budget are important for women. Women make up half the population, and the Australian Government Office for Women in the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has continued its work in ensuring that all portfolios consider the different circumstances and characteristics of women and men.

All policy and program development undertaken by this Government is aimed at benefiting all Australians, and at growing an inclusive and prosperous economy and community.

Women's Budget Highlights 2013-14 identifies measures that recognise, in particular, the pathways women's lives often take, and that represent targeted actions to improve outcomes for women and girls.

These measures build on the significant achievements of this Government – many of which were described in the comprehensive *Women's Statement 2012* – and that have improved the lives of millions of Australian women and girls, now and into the future.

We are particularly pleased to highlight DisabilityCare Australia and the National Plan for School Improvement as nation-building initiatives, which will transform the landscape in areas so greatly in need of support and investment.

We present also a summary of other key measures supporting this Government's enduring theme of providing women with the opportunity to fully and equally participate in work and in the community.

In July this year we will deliver a comprehensive report on Australia's women, tracking the status of women over time and throughout their life course.

DisabilityCare Australia

DisabilityCare Australia, the national disability insurance scheme, will give Australian women the peace of mind to know that if they have or acquire a disability that leaves them needing daily assistance with everyday life, or if they care for someone who has a significant and permanent disability, they will be supported. DisabilityCare Australia will support women with disability to have control and choice in their care, which they may not have had in the past.

Disability could affect us all. Many Australians are already living with disability, either because they themselves have a disability, because a close family member has a disability or because they care for someone with disability. The current system of support is inequitable, underfunded, fragmented and inefficient and provides little choice for people with disability. This is why the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments are building DisabilityCare Australia.

This reform will create opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Australians with disability to participate in our communities and in the economy in a way that many of us take for granted. It is about making sure that the people who most need access to the right support are able to lead a dignified life in a way that works for them, their families and carers

The Australian Government will provide \$19.3 billion over seven years from 2012-13 to roll out DisabilityCare Australia across the country. This brings the Government's total new investment in DisabilityCare Australia to \$14.3 billion over the period (including funding announced in the 2012-13 Budget). This investment in DisabilityCare will ensure all Australians with significant and permanent disability get the support they need. This is compared to the current approach where limited funds are rationed and people who get funds often have to accept a one-size-fits-all approach. Rigorous assessments will be conducted to ensure funds are targeted where they are needed most.

DisabilityCare Australia will look beyond immediate need, and will focus on what is required across a person's lifetime. At its core will be:

- › *A Lifetime approach* – as funding is long term and sustainable, people with disability will have peace of mind that the individualised support they receive will change as their needs change;
- › *Choice and control* – people choose how they get support and have control over when, where and how they receive it, including the option of managing their supports themselves;
- › *Social and economic participation* – overall life goals for participation will be a central focus of supports; and
- › *Focus on early intervention* – the scheme will invest in people to maximise their independence.

From 1 July 2014, the Government will raise the Medicare levy by half a percentage point to provide a strong and enduring funding stream for DisabilityCare Australia. This will raise \$20.4 billion between 2014-15 and 2018-19, to be spent on DisabilityCare Australia.

The States and Territories will also contribute to DisabilityCare Australia, and will be allocated \$9.7 billion over ten years from the increase in Medicare levy revenue. The increase in the Medicare levy, together with savings detailed in the 2013-14 Budget, will fully fund DisabilityCare Australia.

Once fully established in 2018-19, DisabilityCare Australia will directly assist around 460,000 people with significant and permanent disability across Australia, providing them with the support they need, when they need it.

Benefits for women and girls

One in five Australians reported having a disability in 2009, of which over half are women and girls.¹ The most common types of primary disabilities for women are physical (56.2 per cent), sensory (19.6 per cent), psycho-social (11.8 per cent), and intellectual (7.1 per cent).² There are some gender differences between females' and males' primary disability type. Of people accessing disability services under the National Disability Agreement in 2010-11, females were more likely than males to report having a vision, psychiatric or neurological disability, while males were more likely to report having autism than females.³

For people aged 15 to 44 years, there are similar numbers of females and males with profound or severe disability.⁴ However, among people aged 45 to 64 years, there are significantly more women than men with a profound or severe disability. In 2009, the estimated number of women aged 45 to 64 years with a profound or severe disability was 173,500 compared with the number of men within the same group at 139,600.⁵ Despite this, however, women's access to disability support services has historically been less than men's access, across all age groups. In 2010-11, of people who used disability support services under the National Disability Agreement, 186,402 were males with disability while only 127,672 were females with disability.⁶

Additionally, women with disability aged 35 years and older are significantly more likely than men within the same age group to report needing a greater amount of assistance than they currently received.⁷ The gender gap in support and assistance for people with disability can perpetuate other inequalities in everyday life experienced by many Australian women living with disability.

Women and girls with disability often face multiple barriers to participating actively in society. Women with disability are less likely to be in paid work than other women, men with disability and the general population more broadly.⁸ In 2009, the labour force participation rate of women with disability was 49 per cent compared with 60 per cent for men with disability, and 77 per cent for women without disability.⁹ Women with disability are also more likely to have lower paid, part-time and casual jobs than these two groups.¹⁰

Women and girls with disability can also experience difficulty accessing disability and mainstream government services, including health services and education; increased exposure to certain medical procedures including forced sterilisation and abortion; and increased risk of physical, emotional, sexual and psychological violence.¹¹ These experiences can adversely impact upon women's and girls' human rights, quality of life, wellbeing, safety and financial security.

In addition to formal care arrangements, people with disability who require assistance often receive assistance from informal care providers, or carers. Carers include spouses, family members and friends. Two out of three primary carers of people with disability are women.¹² Many female carers of people with disability have other caring responsibilities, as well as full time, part time or casual employment. It is important to remember that many women with disability also have caring responsibilities. Carers make a major contribution to the lives of people with disability and to our society.

Caring can also impact upon carers. Caring for a person with disability may impact upon the health of carers through physical overexertion, or through impacts upon the carer's availability of time for other activities, including health check-ups, physical exercise, and relaxation. Research indicates that, overall, the health of carers of people with disability is significantly worse than in the general population. Given the gendered nature of care giving, this is particularly concerning for women.

In 2008, the rate of poor physical health among female carers was 28.5 per cent compared with females within the general population at 18.3 per cent.¹³ Additionally, female carers of people with disability have significantly worse mental health problems than both male carers and women in the general population.¹⁴

The improvements in the support available to people with disability provided through DisabilityCare Australia will also lead to improved quality of life for their carers, the majority of whom are women, and other family members. DisabilityCare Australia will provide families and carers with the peace of mind that there is a structured plan in place that will mean the person they care for has security into the future.

For too long the system has pushed families and carers, particularly parents, to crisis point where they may struggle to continue in their caring role. To support and sustain informal care arrangements, DisabilityCare Australia will work with families and carers to understand their needs as well as the needs of the person they care for.

DisabilityCare Australia will support both women with disabilities and female carers. By helping women meet the additional costs associated with disability and working with women as active partners, DisabilityCare Australia will empower women with disability to engage more fully in the economy, community and all aspects of their lives. To support this process, DisabilityCare Australia will ensure there is adequate training for all staff to enhance their understanding of the needs of women with disability.

The National Plan for School Improvement

Investing in education is one of the fundamental ways that Australia can secure sustainable and inclusive productive growth. A strong universal education system will expand labour market opportunities, as well as improve the economic and social participation of all sectors of our society.

The Government will provide \$9.8 billion over six years from 2014-15 in once in a generation school reforms to enhance Australia's future productivity and wellbeing. These reforms will deliver greater equity in school funding; improved teacher selection, training and mentoring; and more assistance for schools facing disadvantage to ensure all children can achieve their goals.

The National Plan for School Improvement is Australia's opportunity to lift the performance of all schools and make sure we do not leave any child behind. It establishes a new, fairer school funding approach linked to reforms to take Australian schools into the top five in the world.

The National Plan for School Improvement will address the relative decline in the performance of Australian students in international testing and ensure every student has access to a great school education. To this end, the Government has set two new and important goals for Australian schools in the Asian century: Australia to be placed in the top five countries internationally in reading, mathematics and science by 2025; and Australia to be considered a high quality and high equity schooling system by international standards by 2025. These goals will help lock in our strong starting position in the Asian century and ensure all Australians can make the most of our opportunities.

Australia's current school funding arrangements are complex and inconsistent, and are not providing enough support for those most in need. The Gonski Review proposed a more equitable and consistent system for funding Australian schools. The Government's new Schooling Resource Standard sets a base funding level for every student, built on the costs of schools already achieving strong results. In addition, it provides extra funding for students facing disadvantage, and is designed to help every student succeed, regardless of background.

Every Australian child has the right to a world-class education, no matter where they live, the school they attend or their family background. But too many schools and students are being left behind, and for over a decade, Australian schools have been slipping behind the education standards of the region and the world. There is a need to improve outcomes for all Australian students, and governments have acknowledged that students with disability, students from Indigenous, low socio-economic and limited English speaking backgrounds and students attending schools that are smaller and in remote and regional areas, need more assistance.

The Government has a strong record of supporting disadvantaged students through national partnerships and other targeted programs. Now, for the first time, support for students in need will be an ongoing and permanent part of the system.

Benefits for women and girls

A high quality universal education system is central to achieving gender equality in Australia by directly enabling women and men to gain employment and secure an income.

Australia has made significant advances towards gender equality in education, coming in at equal first in the world for women's educational attainment.¹⁵ Educational attainment is an important consideration in determining women's long term economic wellbeing through its impact on women's participation in the paid workforce.¹⁶

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that in 2011, 84 per cent of women with a higher education qualification were in the labour force, compared with 62 per cent of women with a school qualification.¹⁷ Boosting women's workforce participation and building women's capacity to maintain a strong connection to the workforce are paramount to improving women's economic security.

Over the past ten years, women's educational outcomes have improved dramatically. In 2003, only 29 per cent of women aged 25 to 29 had a bachelor degree or higher, and around 61 per cent had attained year 12.¹⁸ Today, over 39 per cent of women have a bachelor degree or higher and over 65 per cent have completed year 12.¹⁹ Educational outcomes have also improved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the apparent retention rate from Year 7/8 to Year 12 for full-time female students increased from 42 per cent in 2002 to 51 per cent in 2011.²⁰

In the corresponding time period, women (aged 20 to 74) have increased their workforce participation from 61 per cent to over 65 per cent in 2011-12.²¹

On the whole, research shows that the best pathway for young women is completing senior secondary school and undertaking higher education²², and that the benefits that come with any additional schooling may not be fully realised unless the quality of the primary and secondary educational experience is high.²³

The evidence is very clear that education underpins women's choices and life pathways, but that more needs to be done to open these pathways to all women, of all backgrounds and circumstances. This is critical for individual women's wellbeing and economic security and also for their families and their children. Access to education and having parents in work are the two defining factors in addressing intergenerational disadvantage and in ensuring that children have the best possible start in life.

A world class primary and secondary education that develops students' capacity for life-long learning and skill development as well as career mobility is also particularly important for women on the basis of their greater likelihood of broken work patterns and work in insecure casual or part-time roles²⁴ due to increased caring and domestic responsibilities. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, women spend an extra 16 hours and 27 minutes more than men on unpaid work per week.²⁵

Women who have taken time out of the workforce to provide formal or informal care may experience barriers to re-engaging in employment over the life course and this can have substantial flow on effects for their lifetime earnings and, consequently, their superannuation savings,²⁶ with most Australian women holding significantly lower superannuation balances than men.

Australian women are more likely than men to be reliant on the age pension, with women representing 55.7 per cent of all age pensioners and around 70 per cent of all single age pensioners.²⁷

Educational attainment may also be a protective factor when it comes to violence against women. Recognising the value of education as an important tool in preventing violence against women, the Government is working through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to support the inclusion of respectful relationships education in the Australian Curriculum.

It is vitally important that Australia's school system maximises the potential skills and abilities of Australia's future workforce – our nation cannot afford to fail our girls and boys or our economy by being unable to attract the high wage, high skill jobs of the future.

High quality education plays an essential role in the economic, social, cultural and political development of individuals and communities.

The Government recognises that some groups of women and girls, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disability, women of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women from regional and remote areas and women from low socio-economic status backgrounds may experience multiple barriers to accessing and participating in education.²⁸

The Government is committed to ensuring that the opportunities and benefits that come with a high quality education are available to young women and men from all backgrounds, abilities and locations, recognising that this is an important component of achieving gender equality in Australia.

Through its focus on supporting the needs of individual students, the National Plan for School Improvement will increase schools' capacity to build a rich learning foundation for students according to their needs. This strong foundation will support women's pathways through life-long learning and skill development, contributing towards their increased social inclusion and higher employability over the life course.

According to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2012, female teaching staff accounted for 80.8 per cent of all teaching staff at the primary school level, and 58.9 per cent at the secondary level.²⁹ Under the National Plan for School Improvement, Australian teachers, the majority of whom are women, will have access to ongoing professional development, training and support and new teachers will have access to high quality support on entry to the profession.

The Plan also includes higher entry standards for the teaching profession and annual performance assessments. Together, these investments in teaching quality will contribute towards improving professional standards and working conditions for teachers, improving career path opportunities, as well as building capacity for leadership.

Supporting women's economic participation

Supporting women's economic participation is an essential component of ensuring Australian women have equal rights and opportunities to participate across all areas of our society. Achieving improved social and economic participation is critical to securing women's financial wellbeing, as well as continued national economic growth.

Paid Parental Leave

Since its introduction in 2011, over 280,000 working parents have benefitted from Paid Parental Leave (PPL). Many new mothers, including casual and contract workers, now have access to paid leave for the first time. Since 2011, the proportion of women with access to PPL has increased from around 50 to 95 per cent.

This Budget includes a change to the rules so that more women can access PPL when they have another baby. Some working women who have another baby soon after their previous one, can find they are not back at work long enough between babies to meet the work test.

To address this, from 1 March 2014, parents will be able to count the time when they are on government-funded PPL as 'work' under the work test – just like employer funded leave is. The Government expects around 1,300 extra working parents will be able to access PPL every year as a result.

Child care – more flexible arrangements

The Government has announced \$12.9 million over three years to trial flexible child care arrangements aimed at improving access to child care, particularly for families who require care outside standard operating hours.

This package includes \$6.4 million over three years for Child Care Flexibility Trials and a Child Care Flexibility Fund which, working in partnership with parents, employers and unions, will support child care providers to deliver more flexible child care outside the traditional operating hours.

By assisting parents in balancing work and family commitments, the initiative will support the improved workforce participation of primary carers of children, who are often women.

Early childhood education

The Government will provide \$660.1 million to continue the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NPECE), ensuring universal access to preschool. The funding includes \$4.5 million in Commonwealth only expenditure. This new agreement will help maintain service delivery and provide a greater focus on Indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Increase in superannuation

From 1 July 2013, the Superannuation Guarantee rate will start to increase from 9 to 12 per cent, boosting the retirement savings of 8.4 million Australians, and increasing the pool of superannuation savings by more than \$500 billion by 2037. The Superannuation Guarantee rate will increase from 9 to 9.25 per cent from 1 July 2013, and will continue to increase each year until it reaches 12 per cent from 1 July 2019.

The Government will abolish the maximum age limit on the Superannuation Guarantee from 1 July 2013. This reform will increase the incentive for workers aged 70 and over to remain in the workforce and further boost retirement savings. This means that a woman now aged 30, on average weekly earnings with a broken work pattern, will have an extra \$85,000 upon retirement.

Women earn less than men over their lives, and are much more vulnerable to poverty in retirement. The average superannuation payout for women is almost half that received by men.³⁰

Low Income Superannuation Contribution

The Government will amend the eligibility criteria for the Low Income Superannuation Contribution (LISC) to now pay individuals with an entitlement below \$20.

The LISC effectively refunds, up to \$500 a year, the tax paid on superannuation concessional contributions for people with incomes up to \$37,000.

The Government's Low Income Super Contribution will benefit 3.6 million Australians on low and modest incomes, including 2.1 million women, by providing up to \$500 a year to help them save for their retirement. It applies to contributions made in 2012-13 and later financial years for individuals with an adjusted taxable income of up to \$37,000.

Fair Entitlements Guarantee scheme — extension to non-employees in the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry

The Government will provide \$1.2 million over five years to extend the Fair Entitlements Guarantee (FEG) scheme to non-employees in the Textiles, Footwear and Clothing Industry (TCF).

This extension is to accommodate the unique working arrangements of TCF contract outworkers, who are not classified as employees. It will enable FEG assistance to be provided where a TCF contract outworker has not been paid for their work and the person who engaged them to do the work enters into liquidation or bankruptcy.

Workplace bullying

The Government will provide \$21.4 million over four years to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to provide a legal remedy for victims of workplace bullying.

The FWC will work with relevant parties to resolve complaints of workplace bullying. Where a worker has been bullied and the matter cannot be resolved between the parties, the FWC will have the power to make an order to prevent bullying in the workplace in the future.

National workplace relations system — funding for the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman

The Government will provide \$25.7 million over four years to the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman (OFWO) to provide compliance, education and advisory services in support of the national workplace relations system. The new funding will allow the OFWO to continue to deliver services for both employers and employees as set out in the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

Help for small business

Small and medium sized businesses and start-up companies will be provided with expanded business assistance and better access to finance through the \$378 million Venture Australia package to stimulate Australia's venture capital market.

This builds on the Government's strong record of support for small business through Enterprise Connect and Small Business Advisory Services.

Women play a significant role in small business. Women own almost half of all home-based businesses, and one third of businesses operating from other locations. Women setting up a business from home is one of the fastest growing sectors in Australia.³¹

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance

The Government will provide \$27.2 million over five years to continue the eligibility for bridging and foundation courses as approved courses for the Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA) program. JETCCFA provides eligible parents with extra financial assistance to help with the cost of approved child care while they look for work, or undertake study, training or rehabilitation to enter or re-enter the workforce.

The additional funding will allow ongoing support for Year 12 and equivalent courses for parents over 20 years of age, and will also allow the inclusion of non-accredited university enabling courses, also known as bridging courses.

Newstart Allowance

The Government will provide around \$300 million over four years to support jobseekers in the transition to work.

This includes an estimated \$258 million to enable around 800,000 Australians on income support to earn up to \$38 more per fortnight before their payments are affected. Under this change, Australians on Parenting Payment Partnered, Newstart Allowance, and Widow, Sickness or Partner Allowance will be able to earn \$100 per fortnight, up from \$62, before their income support is reduced. This raises what is known as the income free area for the first time in more than a decade. The income free area will, for the first time, be indexed by CPI from 1 July 2015, ensuring its real value remains over time.

Around 150,000 Australians on income support who are currently earning more than \$62 per fortnight are expected to benefit with an average increase of \$19 per fortnight to their payments, or an average of \$494 a year, building on the tripling of the tax free threshold, which has directly improved the rewards for work. The benefit is available to a further 650,000 people on income support per year if they take up work.

Single parents on Newstart (single principal carer) will receive up to \$1,600 more support to undertake training to make the most of job opportunities in a changing economy. This change is particularly important for women, who represent 91 per cent of single principal carer parents in receipt of Newstart.

Further assistance will also be provided for working single parents who no longer qualify for income support. In addition, the \$1.1 billion Income Support Bonus being paid this year provides a boost for all Newstart Allowance recipients.

Pensioner Education Supplement

The Government will extend the Pensioner Education Supplement (PES) by up to \$62.40 a fortnight to all single parents on Newstart Allowance (single principal carer).

This extension will help recipients with the costs of study while they gain an initial qualification to assist them to re-enter the labour market. This expands current arrangements which limit access to the PES to single principal carer recipients of Newstart Allowance who were receiving the supplement prior to transitioning off Parenting Payment Single. These recipients will continue to receive the supplement for the duration of their enrolled course. The new arrangements will take effect from 1 January 2014.

This extra support comes on top of the more generous income test for single principal carer parents on Newstart Allowance which began on 1 January 2013.

By providing an extension of this payment to single Principal Carer Parents who are in receipt of Newstart Allowance, single parents – 91 per cent of whom are women – will have support to undertake education and training to assist them in transitioning off income support and into the workforce.

Extended Pensioner Concession Card entitlements for single parents

The Government will provide \$2.2 million over four years to enable eligible single parents to retain eligibility for the Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) for a period of 12 weeks if they: no longer qualify for Parenting Payment Single because their youngest child has turned eight; and do not qualify for another social security benefit, pension or allowance due to earnings from employment.

Parents affected by this proposal have taken the important step of participating in the labour market and will no longer immediately lose access to the PCC because they earn too much to qualify for another payment.

Pay Equity

The Government is working hard to ensure a more rapid but sustainable rate of change to narrow the pay gap between women and men in Australia.

The Government has established a strong legislative framework, including through reforms to Australia's workplace relations system, which are squarely aimed at increasing fairness, opportunity and flexibility for all Australians. Importantly, the new *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* will enable the Government to track and give advice on pay equity within organisations and across sectors, paving the way for cultural change in Australian workplaces.

Child care workforce – Early Years Quality Fund

In this Budget, the Government will establish the \$300 million Early Years Quality Fund for childcare workers. From 1 July 2013, the fund will help eligible long day care providers attract and retain a highly qualified workforce and meet the National Quality Framework.

The Early Years Quality Fund will support quality outcomes for children by assisting early childhood services to attract and retain qualified professional employees through funding to support wage increases. Eligible Child Care Benefit approved Long Day Care Services will be eligible to apply.

As women account for 95 per cent of all childcare workers,³² wage increases are an important first step in both closing the gender pay gap and recognising the highly valuable work of early childhood educators.

Pay Equity Unit

The Government will provide \$6.2 million over four years to establish a Pay Equity Unit in the Fair Work Commission to assist with data and research collection, and specialist pay equity information. The Unit will have an initial focus on the early childhood education and care sector.

Research, skills, education and training for a smarter Australia

The Government's investments in skills, education and workforce development are creating a more flexible and responsive education and training system to meet the skills needs of a growing economy.

Priority postgraduate and sub-bachelor courses – additional places

Commonwealth funding for university places has increased by 75 per cent between 2007 and 2013, from \$3.5 billion to \$6.1 billion. Around an additional 149,000 places are available in 2013 compared to 2007 levels – that is a 35 per cent increase.

The Government will expand this investment by providing an additional \$97 million from 2014 to 2017 for additional Commonwealth supported places for sub-bachelor and postgraduate courses. Funding has and will continue to benefit from significant growth.

Investment in higher education funding is expected to be a total of \$51 billion over five years from 2012-13.

Australian Research Council – Future Fellowships scheme

The Government will provide \$135.3 million over five years (including \$35.1 million in 2017-18) to continue the Future Fellowships scheme in 2014. Up to 150 additional four-year fellowships, with an estimated value of up to \$211,266 per annum, will be offered to outstanding mid-career researchers to conduct their research in Australia. In addition, each researcher's administering institution will receive up to \$50,000 per annum for costs directly related to the future fellow's research including infrastructure, equipment and travel.

The Future Fellowships scheme aims to attract and retain the best Australian and international mid-career researchers, who might otherwise choose to work overseas. The scheme supports research in areas of crucial national importance.

Apprenticeships – Alternative Pathways Program

An Alternative Pathways Program will be established with funding of \$68.8 million over four years, to deliver more flexible pathways for 4,000 Australians completing a trade or technical qualification in high demand industries facing skills shortages. The Government will progress this through the National Panel for Economic Reform.

There are 212,000 women in trades and technical jobs nation-wide, but fewer than two per cent of construction, automotive and electrical tradespeople in Australia today are women.³³ This represents a significant opportunity to increase the skills-base in these industries, and to improve support for women and men entering these industries.

Skills Connect Fund

The Government will provide \$45.0 million in 2013-14 to establish the Skills Connect Fund, which will streamline government assistance and provide greater flexibility for Australian businesses in accessing workforce development funding, on a co-contribution basis.

Delivering for older Australians

Women live longer and have fewer material resources in retirement than men. Projections indicate that women will make up an increasing proportion of the old and very old segments of the Australian population over time.³⁴

Andrew Fisher Institute

The Government will provide \$4.6 million over four years to establish the Andrew Fisher Applied Policy Institute for Ageing to provide advice on issues such as demographic change, community engagement and participation, health and wellbeing, and infrastructure for an ageing Australia.

Housing help for seniors

The Government will provide \$112.4 million over four years in a trial program to support Aged Pensioners and other pensioners over age pension age who want to downsize their home, without it affecting their pension. The trial will commence on 1 July 2014 and will run for three years.

Under the pension means testing rules, the value of the family home is not assessed and does not affect a person's pension. This means that some senior Australians stay in their family home, even though it may no longer be appropriate for them. This can also put pressure on the housing market.

Keeping seniors connected

The 2013-14 Budget delivers the Keeping Seniors Connected program, which will provide an extra \$9.9 million over four years for new technology and training grants for Broadband for Seniors kiosks.

As part of the successful Broadband for Seniors program, the Government is establishing around 2000 internet kiosks for seniors around the country, providing free access to broadband internet as well as training to teach seniors new computer skills. More than 250,000 seniors have already benefited from Labor's Broadband for Seniors program.

Higher concessional cap for older Australians

The Government is simplifying the proposed higher concessional contributions cap by providing a \$35,000 cap to anyone who meets certain age requirements. The start date for the higher cap will be brought forward to 1 July 2013 for people aged 60 and over. Those aged 50 and over will be able to access it from 1 July 2014.

Improving women's leadership opportunities

Improving women's leadership opportunities is fundamental to achieving gender equality in Australia. Supporting women's leadership ensures that the voices and interests of all Australians are represented across key decision-making and governance forums.

BoardLinks – Improving gender balance on Australian Government boards

The Government is providing \$4.3 million over five years starting in 2011-12 (including capital funding of \$0.1 million in 2011-12 and \$0.4 million in 2012-13), to establish BoardLinks and AusGovBoards initiatives.

BoardLinks is a network established to form better connections between the Australian Government and women seeking board positions, in particular board-ready women seeking their first board appointment. Australian women continue to be underrepresented on high level boards and decision-making bodies.

Boardlinks provides support, training and opportunities for board-ready women to increase the pipeline of experienced women available for appointment to boards in all sectors and assist the Government in meeting its commitment to a minimum of 40 per cent women on Australian Government boards by 2015.

The Government is also establishing AusGovBoards to provide information on Australian Government boards, their role, membership and vacancies.

National Congress of Australia's First Peoples

The Government is continuing to support a national voice for Indigenous Australians by providing \$15 million from 2014-15 to 2016-17 to maintain its support for the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples. This will enable the Congress to effectively represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to provide a vehicle for engagement and consultation on government policy and processes.

By providing for equal representation of women and men for all elected and nominated positions, the Congress' constitution ensures that Indigenous women are represented and have a voice in all consultations with the Government to support the Closing the Gap strategy.

Caring for our Country – Sustainable Agriculture Stream

The Australian Government will provide more than \$2 billion to continue Caring for our Country from 2013-14 to 2017-18. Caring for our Country aims to achieve an environment that is healthy, better protected, well-managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

The Sustainable Agriculture stream of Caring for our Country will support work to achieve a sustainable, productive and resilient agricultural base for Australia. This includes the strategic objective of a skilled and capable Landcare community.

For the first time, Caring for our Country will include targeted investment to increase the leadership and participation of women, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Improving women's health

World leading cancer care

Since 2007, the Australian Government has committed \$3.7 billion to building a world-class system of cancer care. Further funds in this Budget will improve the prevention, detection, treatment and research of cancer, and provide higher levels of patient care and support.

In this Budget, the Government is investing a further \$226.4 million over five years to deliver world leading cancer care for Australians.

Additional funding for BreastScreen Australia program

The Government will provide \$55.7 million over four years to improve the early detection of breast cancer by expanding the target age range of women invited to participate in the BreastScreen Australia program from 50-69, to 50-74 years of age. This will increase the number of services delivered from 2013-14, so that by 2016-17 onwards more than 145,000 additional women are expected to access breast screening services every two years.

This measure also includes targeted communication to inform women and health professionals of the expanded age range and provide system improvements to support BreastScreen Australia services, jurisdictional registries and data reporting functions.

This measure builds on the existing BreastScreen Australia program, which commenced in 1991, and forms part of the Government's cancer package, *World Leading Cancer Care*.

Additional funding for McGrath Foundation Breast Cancer Nurse Initiative

The Government will provide \$19.5 million over four years to continue and expand the McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurse Initiative. McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurses are specially trained registered nurses who act as patient advocates, coordinating care for women with breast cancer, their families and carers.

The Government will fund approximately 13 new positions, bringing the total number of McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurses to 57. The additional nurses will support new Regional Cancer Centres and also provide services in outer metropolitan areas.

This measure builds on the 2008-09 Budget measure *Health and Hospitals Reform – Health Workforce – specialist breast cancer nurses*.

This proposal is expected to assist 15,000 women diagnosed with breast cancer and their families. An evaluation in 2012 confirmed that access to a McGrath breast care nurse had improved the quality of care received by women with breast cancer. The new funding for continuation and expansion of the initiative will commence on 1 July 2013.

Victorian Cytology Service

The Government will provide \$36.5 million over four years to continue funding the Victorian Cytology Service to support the early detection of pre-cancerous cervical conditions.

The Victorian Cytology Service is a cancer centre that processes approximately 300,000 Pap smears per annum including processing Pap smears by practitioners other than General Practitioners, such as nurses, which may lead to increased screening rates in under-screened

groups. It also conducts research into cervical cancer and provides benchmarking data to the Commonwealth on the pricing and services quality of cytology specimens to help establish the scheduled price for Pap smears under the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

National Perinatal Depression Initiative

The Government will provide \$37.4 million over four years to continue the National Perinatal Depression Initiative to improve prevention and early detection of antenatal and postnatal depression and provide better support and treatment for expectant and new mothers experiencing depression.

Up to one in ten women will experience depression during pregnancy. This increases to one in six women in the year following the birth of a child or children.³⁵

State and Territory governments will be provided \$35.4 million to enable mothers to be screened for depression before and after pregnancy, provide training for health professionals, improve follow up support and care for women assessed as at risk, and continue research and data collection. *Beyondblue* will be provided \$2.0 million to continue to support the implementation of the National Perinatal Depression Initiative. The Government will also seek a contribution of \$35.0 million toward this program from State and Territory Governments.

It is estimated that approximately 200,000 women over four years will benefit.

Female genital mutilation – education and awareness

The Government is already providing \$0.5 million in grants in 2012-13 to organisations to undertake education and awareness activities regarding female genital mutilation and to support change within communities.

The Government will also review Australia's legal framework to determine if any changes are required to ensure full protection against the practice both in Australia and abroad and will undertake new research and collect data to build the evidence needed to support women and girls affected by female genital mutilation.

Women's safety

The emotional and personal costs of violence against women and their children affect all parts of our community, namely, the victims, their families and friends, communities and workplaces. Preventing the violence, supporting those who experience it and effectively responding to those who perpetrate the violence will protect the rights of all women to participate fully, equally and safely in family, work and community life.

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022* was agreed by COAG in 2011. Supported by a series of three year national action plans, all Australian governments, along with the non-government sector, are working together to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women. The Australian Government has committed over \$86 million to initiatives under the National Plan, which are reflected in the first three year action plan.

Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children

The Government is providing \$5.2 million over five years for the establishment and operation of the Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children. The Foundation will engage with the community, non-government organisations, and businesses to raise awareness and work towards the prevention of violence against women and their children.

The Foundation will complement the National Centre of Excellence to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

DV-alert

The Government has already committed \$7.6 million over three years to continue and extend the DV-alert training program. Training is available to health and allied health workers to better understand and identify domestic and family violence, and to improve referral and support skills (recognise, respond and refer). Specialist training is available for Indigenous workers and new training will be developed for culturally and linguistically diverse workers. Priority is given to training in rural and regional areas recognising the difficulty victims can face in accessing services in these locations.

Since July 2011, training has been provided to over 1,100 workers in over 45 locations across Australia.

1800RESPECT

The Government has already committed \$28.5 million to June 2017 to continue and expand 1800RESPECT, the national professional telephone and online counselling service for people affected by domestic and family violence and sexual assault, their family and friends and for people who work with victims.

The funding will enable an increase in the number of counsellors available to ensure the availability of the service. It will provide for the translation of online information for victims and workers into a range of community languages. The support available to workers will be expanded to create an online community where information can be exchanged and workers can access specialist professional support.

Since its commencement in October 2010, 1800RESPECT counsellors have had over 51,000 contacts with people affected by violence, their supporters and workers in other services. This includes more than 20,000 contacts between 1 July 2012 and 31 March 2013.

Perpetrator interventions

The Government has already committed \$3 million over three years to create a dedicated research stream on perpetrator interventions through the National Centre of Excellence to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. This will support the implementation of national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions. The standards will be developed through consultation with governments and non-government providers, and agreed with States and Territories by the end of 2013.

Investments for a fairer Australia

Ensuring our most vulnerable are supported over the course of their lives will contribute to building a society that is fairer for all Australians. We are investing in a range of activities, including in the areas of health and wellbeing, financial support and assistance, housing and improved access to technologies, to better support vulnerable women and their families.

Additional support for the Queensland Working Women's Service

The Government will provide \$0.8 million over three years to the Queensland Working Women's Service to allow the centre to continue to deliver workplace relations advisory services to disadvantaged and vulnerable workers.

This is an important investment by the Government to protect a service that helps Queensland's most vulnerable women workers.

This investment will ensure that services provided by the Queensland Working Women's Service including self-help information sessions for women representing themselves before the Fair Work Commission, evening legal advice services, and community legal education and research services can continue.

Additional funding for Community Legal Centres

The Government will provide \$10.3 million over four years to Community Legal Centres to help meet increasing demand for services. The additional funding will assist disadvantaged Australians in areas such as family law, mortgage stress and tenancy matters.

Support for people affected by past forced adoption practices

On 21 March 2013, the Prime Minister Julia Gillard apologised on behalf of the Australian Government to people affected by forced adoption or removal policies and practices.

The national apology was delivered in the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra.

The Government is providing \$12.6 million over five years from 2012-13 to fund the Government's response to people affected by past forced adoption practices.

This funding comprises:

- › \$7.6 million to provide those affected by past forced adoption practices with access to a range of social and support services, and the development of guidelines and training materials for mental health professionals to assist in the treatment of those affected;
- › \$2.5 million for additional services provided through the Access to Allied Psychological Services Program;

- › \$1.5 million for a public exhibition coordinated by the National Archives of Australia, which will document the experiences of individuals affected by forced adoption; and
- › \$1.0 million in 2012-13 for the National Forced Adoptions Apology given by the Prime Minister on 21 March 2013.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Government will provide \$434.1 million over four years from 2012-13 to fund the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Commission will inquire into institutional responses to allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse and also what institutions and governments should do to better protect children against sexual abuse in institutional contexts in the future. While the Commission has commenced its operations, the level of activity and the number of complaints and allegations and the number and location of hearings needed, will become clearer as the Commission progresses. In future budget processes, the Government will review the need for any changes to the Commission's funding as additional information becomes available, in consultation with the Royal Commission.

The funding includes \$45.0 million over four years from 2012-13 for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to provide expert services to help support survivors of child sexual abuse.

National Transitional Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

The Government has committed up to \$159.0 million to provide a continuation of services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, through a one year transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

In addition to the direct provision of homelessness services, the National Partnership will provide a new capital development fund and will strengthen the evidence base to better respond to homelessness, including through a continuation of the longitudinal study, *Journeys Home*.

Domestic and family violence continues to be the major cause of homelessness for women, and escaping violence is the most common reason provided by people who seek help from specialist homelessness services. Specialist homelessness services targeting women and children escaping domestic and family violence are a significant part of service system responses to domestic and family violence.

Conclusion

This Government is committed to ensuring the long term wellbeing of our nation. Our biggest reforms are directly aimed at the economic, social, cultural and political development of individuals and communities because we know these investments will protect and enable our most vulnerable, as well as protecting and growing our economy.

The 2013-14 Budget strikes the right balance between supporting Australians who need it the most and making the necessary investments to secure the sustainable and inclusive productive growth of our nation.

Taking us forward, the Australian Government Office for Women will continue to work across portfolios to build the skills of the Australian Public Service to support the Government's gender equality objectives.

The Office for Women is developing practical measures to embed gender considerations even more firmly into all the work we do. The central nature of gender equality across policy development and evaluation will continue to grow.

Within Government we will also continue our work in ensuring that we achieve gender balance on Australian Government boards. In 2012, women held 38.4 per cent of board positions – an all-time high, and well on our way to reaching our 40 per cent target.

Every facet of the Government's work – our ambitious legislative reform program, our policy development, our funding supports, and as employers ourselves – has focused keenly on delivering improved outcomes across the economy and the community.

Gender equality will continue to be a commitment that lies at the very heart of the Government's overarching social and economic goals.

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