

CHIEF EXECUTIVE WOMEN

2025 FEDERAL ELECTION

KEY POLICY ASKS

Australian women are among the most educated and skilled in the world, yet their full economic potential remains unrealised.

At a time when Australia faces critical economic and productivity challenges, unlocking women's workforce participation is one of the most powerful levers for sustainable growth.

With the right policy settings, we can drive economic prosperity, strengthen workforce capacity, and build a more competitive, future-focused economy that benefits all Australians.

Gender equality isn't just the right thing to do — it's an economic necessity.

Increasing women's workforce participation will unlock economic benefits for Australia:

- \$128,000,000,000 could be added to Australia's GDP by achieving gender equality.
- \$11,000,000,000 would be added to Australia's GDP by increasing women's working hours by just 2%.
- 1,000,000 additional full-time skilled workers could be unlocked if Australian women were engaged in paid work at the same rate as men.

GENDER EQUALITY MAXIMISING AUSTRALIA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

CEW calls on the future government to:

1. Build the pipeline for women's advancement in male dominated industries

Australia has one of the most gender segregated workforces in the OECD

2. Deliver adequate affordable housing considering the needs of women

Women over 55 are the fastest growing homeless cohort

3. Invest in women's safety and economic security

Gender-based violence is a national crisis

4. Make early childhood education and care universal

Universal early childhood would boost GDP by \$24 billion annually

5. Support women's health to enable workforce participation

Women retire 12 years earlier than they want to, largely due to health issues

6. Build gender balanced leadership, appoint a gender-balanced cabinet

Research shows that more women in political leadership benefits society.



“Gender equality is an economic imperative. It is the single biggest lever we have to build an economy that reflects modern Australia, and to uplift stalling productivity for the benefit of everyone.”

Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz, CEW President

1. RECOMMENDATION ONE

BUILD THE PIPELINE FOR *WOMEN'S* ADVANCEMENT IN MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRIES

- **Work with industry, unions, and professional associations to create and expand programs to support women in all their diversity to enter and succeed in male-dominated and emerging industries.**

Supporting data

- Australia has one of the most gender segregated workforces in the OECD.
- Reducing occupational segregation has historically contributed 20-40% GDP growth per capita.
- In the construction industry, women hold only 16% of professional and management positions, and more than 50% of companies have no women in key management teams.
- The energy transition is expected to create 67 million new jobs by 2030, but without intervention, women are projected to hold only 25% of these roles.

2. RECOMMENDATION TWO

DELIVER ADEQUATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSIDERING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN

- **Review the taxation system considering the implications for housing affordability.**
- **Increase the rate of rent assistance in line with the recommendation of the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee.**
- **Increase social housing availability, with a particular focus on women.**
- **Develop targeted housing pathways for vulnerable groups.**
- **Implement safety-focused design requirements in boarding houses and homeless services, with dedicated support for older women.**

Supporting data

- Women over 55 are now the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness.
- The 2021 Census showed a 10% increase in women experiencing homelessness since 2016 – almost twice the national average.

3. RECOMMENDATION THREE

INVEST IN WOMEN'S SAFETY AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

- Adequately resource delivery of the National Action Plan to end violence against women and their children, particularly community based support service, and prevention strategies that prioritise a whole of community approach.
- Review transparency requirements of federal funding through the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence National Partnership Agreement 2023–25.
- Increase Jobseeker to 90% of the Age Pension, in line with Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee recommendations.
- Review taxation and transfer systems with a gender lens to address high Effective Marginal Tax Rates experienced by women.

Supporting data

- Intimate partner violence deaths have increased 30% in the past year.
- Economic empowerment is essential for physical safety.
- Women leaving violent relationships face 45% income drop and often require government benefits.
- The current Jobseeker payment (\$749/fortnight) represents only 40% of minimum wage and falls below the poverty line

4. RECOMMENDATION FOUR

MAKE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE UNIVERSAL

- Make high quality, accessible childcare available to all Australian children.
- Address working conditions to ensure a sustainable sector and attractive career pathways.
- Implement a price cap of \$10 per child per day.

Supporting data

- More than half of Australian women report turning down a new job or promotion because additional childcare costs made it not worthwhile.
- Universal early childhood would boost GDP by \$24 billion annually and unlock a ready workforce of 264,000 women.

5. RECOMMENDATION FIVE

SUPPORT WOMEN'S HEALTH TO ENABLE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

- **Increase research on women's health, include women in policy development and increase funding for women's health initiatives.**
- **Create and implement a comprehensive National Menopause Action Plan, including expanded rural healthcare access.**
- **Strengthen healthcare education by incorporating menopause-specific training in medical curricula and conducting national research.**

Supporting data

- Women currently retire 12 years earlier than they want due to health issues.
- 45% of women cite health issues as their primary reason for leaving the workforce.
- This early retirement costs Australia's GDP \$72 billion annually in lost productivity.

6. RECOMMENDATION SIX

BUILD GENDER-BALANCED LEADERSHIP AND CABINET

- **Appoint a gender balanced cabinet.**
- **Deliver gendered procurement, supporting the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill.**

Supporting data

- Companies with at least one woman on the board have returns on equity that are 3.6% higher on average