

THE CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality benefits everyone, across every sector, community, and country. It helps societies thrive, strengthens economies, and builds more inclusive, peaceful, and resilient communities.

But in Australia and around the world, gender inequality continues to limit opportunities and hold back progress. When women and girls are denied equal rights and representation, we all miss out. Gender bias devalues people, undermines our social fabric, and wastes human potential. It is not just a human rights issue, it's a barrier to shared prosperity and collective progress.

Gender equality means everyone has the right to participate fully and equally in society, no matter their gender. Advancing equality opens doors for more people to use their skills, lead change, and contribute to stronger communities and fairer systems. Evidence shows that when women have equal access to education, health care, decent work, and leadership, outcomes improve for everyone—from families and workplaces to entire nations.

This is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. A more equal world is a more sustainable, creative, and just one. Together, we can challenge inequality, remove barriers, and build a future where all people, regardless of gender, have equal rights and equal opportunities.

Why It Matters

IN THE WORKPLACE

- Companies in the top quartile for board-gender diversity are **27% more likely to outperform financially** than those in the bottom quartile.¹
- Companies with higher female leadership representation on average have **higher returns on equity and profit margins**.²
- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams were **21% more likely to experience above-average profitability**.³
- Workplace inclusion makes employees **3 times less likely to leave their organisation**, 4 times more likely to provide excellent customer service, and **5 times more likely to work harder** for their team's success.⁴
- If women's participation matched men's, **Australia's GDP would increase by \$30.7 billion**, or 8.7% to \$353 billion by 2050.⁵
- The gender pay gap **costs the Australian economy \$51.8 billion** every year.⁶
- Closing the Australian workforce participation gap between men and women would **create an additional 1 million full-time equivalent workers** with post-school qualifications.⁷
- Women leaving management roles was **reduced to 0.3% for employers that integrated workplace gender equality** into their businesses and strategies.⁸

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- **37 women were killed** by a current or former intimate partner in 2024.⁹
- Nearly **1 in 3 female victims** of intimate partner homicide in 2024 **identified as First Nations**.⁹
- Women are **30-45% more likely to experience high financial stress** if they had experienced sexual violence than women of the same age who hadn't experienced violence.¹⁰
- **1 in 2 women** and 1 in 4 men working in retail **have experienced sexual harassment**, with young women under the age of 25 most likely to be targeted.¹¹
- There are significant economic costs resulting from violence. **Gender-based violence costs Australia \$26 billion a year**.¹²
- Gendered financial abuse is **estimated to cost \$10.9 billion a year** – with \$5.7 billion of that cost borne directly by victims.¹³

ECONOMIC EQUALITY AND SECURITY

- When comparing full-time equivalent total remuneration of private sector employees, which includes superannuation, bonuses, overtime, other payments but excluding CEO remuneration, **the average gender pay gap is 21.1%**.¹⁴
- **90% of large private sector employers** have a policy or strategy to support gender equality in the workplace.¹⁴

LEADERSHIP, REPRESENTATION AND DECISION MAKING

- In the private sector, the CEO and head of business **gender pay gap is 27.1%**.¹⁴
- In media, women make up **49% of the workforce**, but hold **only 30% of CEO roles**.¹⁵

UNPAID AND PAID CARE

- On average, **women do 32 hours of unpaid work and care a week**, 9 hours more than men.¹⁶
- On average, **First Nations women undertake 11.5 hours per day caring for others and/or caring for Country and culture**. Unpaid care is often viewed as strength and something to be deeply valued.¹⁷

HEALTH

- Women are more likely to use health care services than men and are **more likely to face higher healthcare costs** over time.¹⁸
- **4 in 5 Australian women** aged 18–44 years **have experienced chronic menstrual symptoms** in the last 5 years and almost half have missed days of work or study as a result.¹⁹
- **1 in 4 women** aged 45–64 years report that symptoms attributed to **menopause make it hard to do daily activities**.¹⁹
- The leading causes of loss of healthy life for women are **dementia, anxiety disorders, and back pain**. For men, they are coronary heart disease, back pain, and suicide.²⁰

¹ McKinsey & Company, *Diversity Matters Even More*, 2023. ² Goldman Sachs, *Womenomics in Australia – Some Progress, but More Potential*, 2019. ³ McKinsey & Company, *Delivering Through Diversity*, 2018. ⁴ Diversity Council Australia, *Inclusion@Work Index, Mapping the state of inclusion in the Australian workforce*, 2024. ⁵ Equity Economics, *Back of the pack – How Australia's parenting policies are failing women and our economy*, December 2021, p 9 and CEW (Chief Executive Women) (2022) *Addressing Australia's critical skill shortages: Unlocking women's economic participation*, Sydney. ⁶ KPMG, *Diversity Council of Australia, WGEA, She's Price(d)less*, 2022. ⁷ Chief Executive Women and Impact Economics and Policy, *Addressing Australia's Critical Skill Shortages: Unlocking Women's Economic Participation*. Chief Executive Women Ltd, 2022. ⁸ BCEE, *WGEA, Gender Equity Insights 2023: Accelerating the pace of change*, 2023. ⁹ Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), *Homicide in Australia*, AIC website, 2025. ¹⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Family, domestic and sexual violence: Economic and financial impacts*, AIHW website, 2024. ¹¹ ANROWS, *"Just another day in retail": Understanding and addressing workplace sexual harassment in the Australian retail industry*, ANROWS website, 2024. ¹² KPMG, *The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia – Final Report*, 2016. ¹³ Deloitte Access Economics and Commonwealth Bank of Australia, *The cost of financial abuse in Australia*, 2022. ¹⁴ WGEA, *Australia's gender equality scorecard 2023–24*. ¹⁵ L Risse, *Women in the media in Australia: A statistical portrait*, Report prepared for Women in Media, 2025. ¹⁶ ABS (2020–21), *How Australians Use Their Time*, ABS Website, 2021. ¹⁷ E Klein, J Hunt, Z Staines, Y Dinku, C Brown, K Glynn-Braun and M Yap, *Caring about Care (Commissioned Report No. 7/2023)*, Centre for Indigenous Policy Research, Australian National University, 2023. ¹⁸ S Duckett, A Stobart and L Lin, *Not so universal: How to reduce out-of-pocket healthcare payments*, Grattan Institute, 2022. ¹⁹ Jean Hailes for Women's Health, *Bothersome periods experienced by Australian women aged 18 to 44 years*, Jean Hailes Foundation, 2024. ²⁰ AIHW, *Australian burden of disease study 2024*, AIHW website, February 2024.