

Women & COVID:
Building a Gender-Inclusive
Recovery

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**Leaving women behind:
The real cost of the
Covid recovery**

Australian **Unions**

Disproportionate Impact on Women

- More women lost jobs.
 - 3.4% decline (2.9% for men).
 - 57% of female jobs lost full-time.
 - 88% of jobs rebound since May part-time.
- More women lost hrs & left labour market.
- Under strain on frontlines of the pandemic.
- Explosion in caring & household work disproportionately carried by women.
- Increased psychosocial risks, violence & harassment.
 - On the job & at home.



2020 Budget Left Women Behind

Income tax cuts:

- Won't create jobs.
- Will increase inequality.
 - 88% of benefit goes to top 20%.
 - \$2.28 flows to men for every \$1 to women.

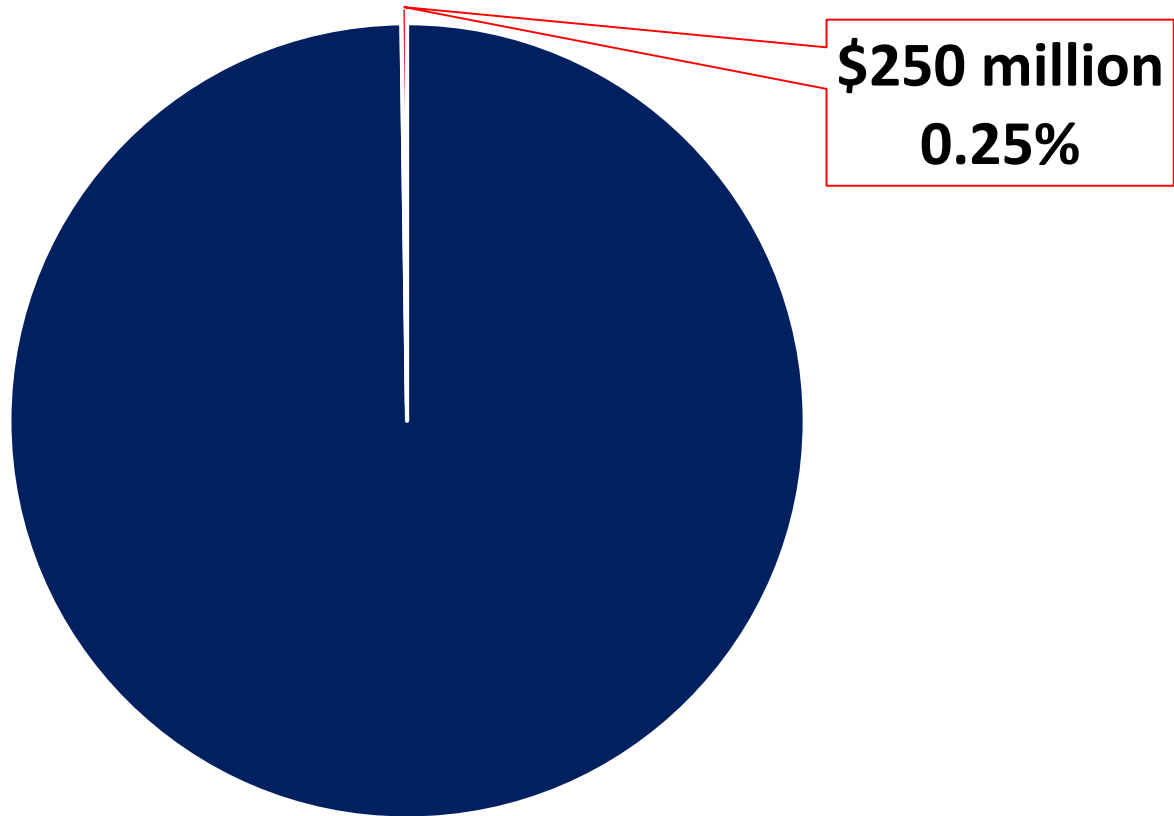
JobMaker hiring credit:

- Expands insecure work for youth.
- Older women find harder to get entry-level jobs.



\$110 Billion Over 5yrs ...And Women's Worth?

- Scope of programs too narrow.
- Mentoring & start-up funds for women in business.
- 500 STEM positions =100/yr
- Respect@Work Council to advise government.



■ Total Tax & Spending Measures ■ Women's Economic Security Statement

Other Crisis Responses Hurt

- JobKeeper ineligibility & cuts.
 - +1m short-term casuals denied.
 - Cuts targeted at ECEC (& no other sector).
 - Two-tiered payment “bakes in” lower incomes & hrs.
- Cuts to Coronavirus Supplement plunge more women into poverty.
- Re-introduction of ECEC fees.
- Superannuation early release.
 - 1.7 million women stripped \$13 billion from accounts.
 - Women <20 + 36-55 took more out than men.
 - Lasting financial damage to women’s retirement security.
- Minimum wage & public sector pay freezes.

Why Is the Crisis Impacting Women Most?

- Systematic discrimination in labour market.
 - High job segregation by gender: “women’s jobs”.
 - Undervalued: insecure work, lower-pay (30% lower!).
 - Barriers to participation.
 - Economy failing to create enough jobs.
- Women still expected to undertake lion’s share of unpaid caring work.



Three Key Pillars of Gender-Inclusive Recovery

1. Urgent crisis measures to help women now.
 2. Longer-run structural change for better jobs & incomes, retirements & public services.
 3. Putting women in driving seat of economic governance.
- Pre-pandemic 'normal' was neither acceptable nor sustainable.
 - We must build a new normal!

1. A Critical Floor of Support

- Above-poverty income supports.
- Expand & restore JobKeeper.
- Paid pandemic leave.
- Reforms to address violence & harassment.
 - 10 days paid DV leave.



2. A Gender-Equal Reconstruction Plan

- An ambitious program of public spending that reflects the real economy & “rights the wrongs”.
- Some key elements:
 - Invest in social infrastructure as building blocks of gender-inclusive recovery.
 - Healthcare, education, disability & community services.
 - More jobs per investment dollar, can “anchor” growth across cities & regions + make public services better.
 - Establish system of free universal public early childhood care & education.

- Require businesses & organisations receiving public money in contracted services to deliver good jobs.
- Rebuild a public post-secondary education & skills system.
 - Nation-wide free TAFE program + direct minimum 70% public VET funding to TAFE.
 - Expand training opportunities for women including in apprenticeships.
- Reform aged care.
- A national program of sustained public housing construction.
- Strengthen retirement income security.
 - Super paid on every \$ for every worker.
 - Close “motherhood gap” + fastrack 15% “catch-up” for women.
 - Scrap early release scheme.

3. Govern the Economy to Reduce Inequality

- We need changes to traditional economic policy governance.
- Build public sector capacity to assess gendered impacts of all policy.
- New tripartite body to oversee job creation proposals with powers to report & make recommendations.

The Tools We Need

- Unions can win a new economy for women.
... and make pay equity real along the way!
- Gender-inclusive recovery requires revitalised IR system:
 - Extend minimum standards to all workers including casuals.
 - Sectoral-bargaining.
 - Protections for workers in the home.
 - Lift anti-union laws.

