

# NSW BUDGET 2024-25



## Gender Equality Budget Statement





# Regeneration

*A long time ago in this place we know now as New South Wales, this place was known by many names. The names known by the people who tended the land and nurtured it as it nurtured them.*

*A great storm came. The wind whipped across the land. It stripped the trees of their seeds, throwing them into the air. Then came the rain, drumming across the land. It hurled the seeds to the ground. And still down came the rain. It flooded the land, until there was nothing but water. And the seeds tossing in the turbulent water.*

*Slowly, the storm subsided. The wind quieted. The rain gentled to a fine mist, burned away by the sun. In time, the seeds began to germinate in the water. In time, the seeds regrew the land. They regrew the bush flowers and the trees.*

*They regrew the people of New South Wales. The seeds regenerated the land and the people. The people who will walk together, hand-in-hand, to nurture the land as it nurtures them, to heal the land and the people affected by the storm, and to build a future where all the people who call this place New South Wales can prosper.*

**– Josie Rose**



## **Regeneration** (2020)

Josie Rose is a Gumbaynggirr woman who expresses her contemporary Gumbaynggirr cultural heritage through art. For *Regeneration*, a work commissioned by NSW Treasury, her chosen medium is acrylic paint on canvas and the design embodies both creative and cultural expression. The inspiration for her artworks comes from a deep place of spiritual connection to her family, community, culture and respect for Mother Earth. Gumbaynggirr Country, on the Mid North Coast, is beautiful land with both freshwater and saltwater waterways which inspire her holistic connection to the Ancestors.

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Australia, and the oldest continuing culture in human history.

We pay respect to Elders past and present and commit to respecting the lands we walk on, and the communities we walk with.

We celebrate the deep and enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country and acknowledge their continuing custodianship of the land, seas and sky.

We acknowledge the ongoing stewardship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the important contribution they make to our communities and economies.

We reflect on the continuing impact of government policies and practices, and recognise our responsibility to work together with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities, towards improved economic, social and cultural outcomes.

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## A note on data

Due to limitations in data collection, data reported in this Statement generally relates to sex rather than gender. The terms female and male are used when presenting data collected based on biological sex.

## A note on gender

Where this Statement describes differences in the experiences of women and men, it refers to all people identifying as women and men, including transgender and cisgender people. NSW Treasury is committed to incorporating the experiences of gender diverse people in a meaningful way.

## Support information

This document may contain sensitive content relating to discrimination, inequality, and domestic and family violence. If you are affected, support is available. Lifeline provides nationwide 24-hour support for those experiencing a personal crisis and can be contacted by calling 13 11 14 or visiting [lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au). 1800RESPECT is available to support people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence. The NSW Mental Health Line (1800 011 511) is NSW Health's 24/7 statewide free phone service which links people with NSW Health mental health services.

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# Foreword

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Gender equality is central to our wellbeing, the performance of our State's economy and the safety of our society. As much as gender equality is about creating a fairer future for women and girls, it benefits everyone in our community.

Over the past year, many precious lives have been tragically cut short by domestic and family violence. We cannot have an equal society until women and children are safe in public spaces and in their homes.

We are steadfast in our commitment to caring for and building better communities. This can only happen if everyone has the same opportunities, regardless of their gender.

The Gender Equality Budget Statement speaks to the progress we are making in moving towards gender equality in NSW. It also sets out our future plans.

In the past year, we have seen progress on narrowing the gap between economic outcomes for women and men. Women's labour force participation continues to rise, and the NSW gender pay gap is the lowest on record.

However, barriers persist for women to achieve equal opportunities and safety in workplaces. This Budget supports women to obtain more secure jobs, skills in priority sectors and backs our essential female dominated workforces.

This Budget is investing in a comprehensive package of reforms to address both the impacts of gender-based violence and to take preventive action for the future. This includes targeted initiatives to support women and families to remain safe in their homes after leaving violent relationships.

Many women are increasingly facing the risk of homelessness due to the housing crisis. This Budget is committed to building better communities by tackling inequality across multiple domains of the housing crisis including rental affordability, social housing and key worker housing.



This Gender Equality Budget Statement showcases our commitment to gender-responsive budgeting. By applying a gender lens to decision-making and the budgetary process, we ensure policy and programs are designed to meet the needs of everyone across NSW.

Progress to achieve gender equality is not the work of a single budget. We will continue to invest in policies and initiatives that ensure that all people regardless of gender live and work in a safe and fair society where they are treated with respect and dignity.

**The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC**  
NSW Treasurer

**The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP**  
Minister for Women  
Minister for Seniors  
Minister for the Prevention of  
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

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# Budget highlights

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**\$5.1  
billion**

to build 8,400 social homes,  
including priority homes for  
victim-survivors of domestic  
and family violence



**\$655.0  
million**

for key worker and  
rental housing



**\$527.6  
million**

for crisis accommodation  
and homelessness  
support services



**\$245.6  
million**

to enhance support for  
domestic, family and sexual  
violence victim-survivors



**\$130.9  
million**

Family Start Package  
to boost maternal and  
child health programs  
including funding for  
Tresillian and Karitane



**\$16.3  
million**

to be spent in  
2024-25 for fee free  
apprenticeships  
and traineeships



**Bail law  
reform**

to make it harder for  
serious domestic violence  
offenders to get bail

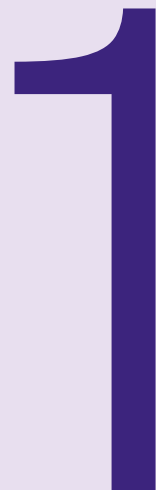


**100  
preschools**

the NSW Government  
is delivering the  
biggest ever investment  
in public preschools

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# Overview





# The NSW Government is committed to the pursuit of a gender equal society. To achieve this, we need to deliver outcomes across a range of domains that improve gender equality, and advance economic outcomes for all people across NSW.

The 2024-25 Gender Equality Budget Statement highlights NSW Government investments across three priority areas for action, aligned with the NSW Women's Strategy 2023-2026:



Health and wellbeing



Economic opportunity and advancement



Participation and empowerment

There are established relationships between gender equality and economic outcomes. It is well documented that people who are not economically secure experience cost of living pressures more acutely. In particular, women with low economic security face greater challenges escaping domestic and family violence,<sup>1</sup> and are more likely to be at risk of experiencing homelessness.<sup>2</sup> This Budget is focused on addressing the housing crisis, investing in our health care system and reducing domestic and family violence and supporting victim-survivors.

NSW has seen the devastating impacts domestic and family violence has on individuals, children, families and the broader community. That is why the NSW Government is investing \$245.6 million on programs aimed at reducing the rate of violence against women and children and enhancing support for domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors.

All women in NSW have the right to feel safe and be respected, whether they are at home, at work, or in public spaces. Yet many women continue to experience violence and abuse in their everyday lives, most commonly at the hands of a current or former intimate partner.

Domestic, family and sexual violence not only harms individuals, but destroys families and communities and undermines our ability to achieve gender equality in society. The physical, psychological, emotional, social and financial impacts of such violence often reverberate through people's lives and cause hardship for many years. Reducing domestic, family and sexual violence is essential to improving outcomes for women and enabling them to thrive in all areas of life.

–Dr Hannah Tonkin, NSW Women's Safety Commissioner



**\$5.1  
billion**

to build 8,400 social homes, including priority homes for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence

These initiatives are complemented by legal reforms to strengthen bail laws to better protect victim-survivors by making it harder for those accused of serious domestic violence offences to get bail.

Under the new law, people charged with serious domestic violence offences will be required to 'show cause' as to why they should not be detained until their case is determined, reversing the presumption of bail. Those charged with such offences must also, if granted bail, be subject to electronic monitoring.

Additionally, from 1 July 2024 a standalone criminal offence for coercive control in current or former intimate partner relationships will come into effect in NSW. This landmark legislative change is complemented by a public awareness campaign 'It's not love, it's coercive control' and specialist training for police, the judiciary and specialist workers.



**\$245.6  
million**

on programs aimed at reducing domestic violence

A campaign tailored for First Nations young people and an in-language campaign have also been developed.

The NSW Government is investing \$5.1 billion in new and replacement social housing stock. This is the largest ever investment in NSW social housing. It is a major step to help those suffering from family and domestic violence. Over 34,000 women and children are on the social housing waiting list, with 5,000 assessed as in urgent need. These women are often escaping or are at high risk of domestic and family violence.

The NSW Government is investing in programs to support better health outcomes for the community. This Budget invests in early intervention programs to boost lifelong maternal and child health, more immunisation practitioners to increase vaccine uptake in at-risk communities and more mental health care.

## Gender responsive budgeting

The NSW Government is implementing gender responsive budgeting through gender impact assessments. Selected initiatives within this Budget underwent a gender impact assessment. Case studies of some of these gender impact assessments have been included throughout the Statement.

Gender responsive budgeting applies a gender lens to government decision making and resource allocation by considering the impacts of policies and programs on everyone.

The gender impact assessments also identify how the proposals support progress on key gender equality indicators. These indicators are discussed throughout this Statement, including how the 2024-25 Budget is working to advance the outcomes.

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# Gender equality: economic snapshot

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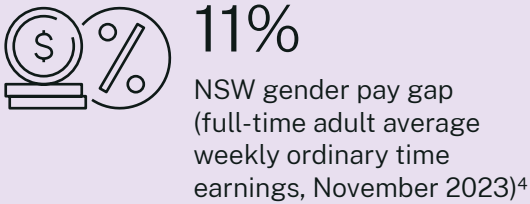
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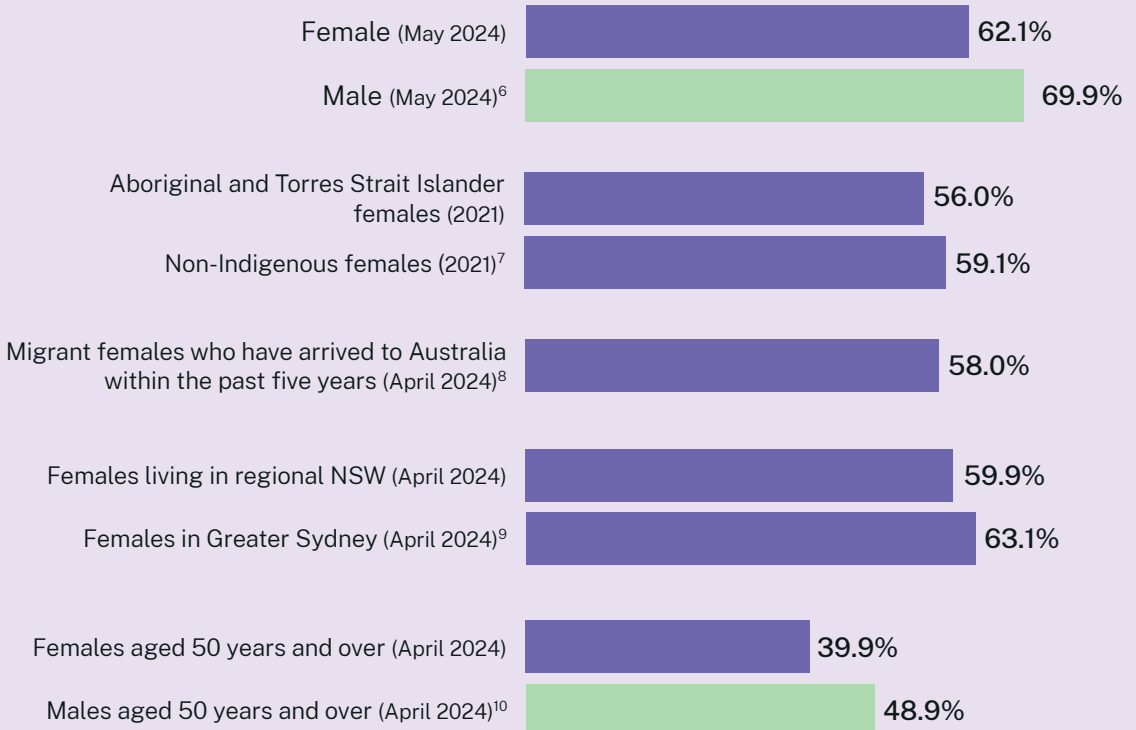
# Data snapshot



## Gender pay gap



## Workforce participation rate





An important function of the NSW Budget is to provide the economic outlook and outline the NSW Government's plans to address key challenges and opportunities. This Statement provides a gender lens on economic performance and highlights key issues impacting gender equality within the NSW economy.

## Income is more unequally distributed among women than it is among men

The distribution of income in society is an important dimension of equality and wellbeing. The Gini coefficient is the most widely recognised measure of income inequality. A Gini coefficient of zero indicates perfect equality, where everyone has the same income. A value of one indicates perfect inequality, where one person receives all income, and everyone else receives nothing.

Using this measure, not only do women in NSW earn less than men, but there is also a greater degree of income inequality across the population of working age women than is the case for working age men.

In 2021-22 in NSW, the Gini coefficient for women of working age was 0.411, compared to 0.385 for men,<sup>11</sup> indicating a more uneven distribution of income among women.

NSW Treasury estimates that in 2021-22, 17 per cent of women in NSW were living below the poverty line compared to 14 per cent of men.<sup>12</sup> The poverty line is defined as 50 per cent of the median income of the total population.<sup>13</sup>

Income inequality and poverty rates are important indicators of women's economic security. Monitoring these indicators is important to support the development of pathways for individuals to exit poverty and ensure that economic and social opportunities are available to everyone in NSW.

## Employment outcomes for women are improving but are not at parity with men

The NSW labour force participation rate for females aged 15 years and over was 62.1 per cent as at May 2024.<sup>14</sup>

This was 7.8 percentage points below the male participation rate.<sup>15</sup> Progress on narrowing the gap is evident, decreasing from 11.3 percentage points in May 2019, the largest gap in the past five years. An increase in employers providing flexible working arrangements post-pandemic<sup>16</sup> has likely enabled more women, particularly those with caring responsibilities, to enter and stay in the labour market.

Different cohorts of women still experience unequal participation in the workforce. As at April 2024, in NSW the participation rate for:

- migrant women who have arrived within the past five years was 58.0 per cent<sup>17</sup>
- women living in regional NSW was 59.9 per cent, 3.2 percentage points below that of women in Greater Sydney<sup>18</sup>
- women aged 50 years and over was 39.9 per cent compared to 48.9 per cent for men of the same age.<sup>19</sup>

Although not comparable to the current 2024 data, according to the 2021 Census (when the female participation rate was lower), the workforce participation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in NSW was 56.0 per cent, compared to 59.1 per cent for non-Indigenous women.<sup>20</sup>

Gendered disparity in full-time and part-time work remains. In May 2024, 59.3 per cent of employed women worked full-time compared to 80.1 per cent of men.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile 40.7 per cent of women worked part-time compared to 19.9 per cent of employed men.<sup>22</sup>

The gender gap in underemployment also persists. In May 2024, the underemployment rate (employed people who want and are available for more hours of work, as a share of the labour force) for females was 7.4 per cent compared to 5.3 per cent of men.<sup>23</sup> Women aged between 25-44 years are underemployed for three times longer than men of the same age.<sup>24</sup>

## Industry and occupation gender segregation remains entrenched in the workforce

Promoting a more gender balanced workforce has the potential to improve equity and the allocation of talent, as well as reduce the gender pay gap.

As at February 2024, the industries with the largest female workforces in NSW were health care and social assistance (76.2 per cent female) and education and training (71.2 per cent female).<sup>25</sup> The most male dominated industries were mining (88.3 per cent male) and construction (86.2 per cent male).<sup>26</sup>

In the past year, the gap between female and male representation has widened in some industries, with mining

becoming more male dominated as male representation increased by 7.7 percentage points, while female representation in health care increased by 0.7 percentage points.<sup>27</sup>

While the gendered distribution of occupations follows similar patterns, some improvements are emerging. In February 2024, females made up 71.5 per cent of clerical and administrative workers, 67.0 per cent of community and personal service workers and 56.5 per cent of sales workers.<sup>28</sup> These occupations have experienced the largest decrease in gender segregation over the past year, revealing gradual progress towards equitable representation. However, 86.2 per cent of machinery operators and drivers and 83.1 per cent of technicians and trades workers are male.<sup>29</sup> The gendered make up of these male dominated occupations has not changed significantly in the past year.

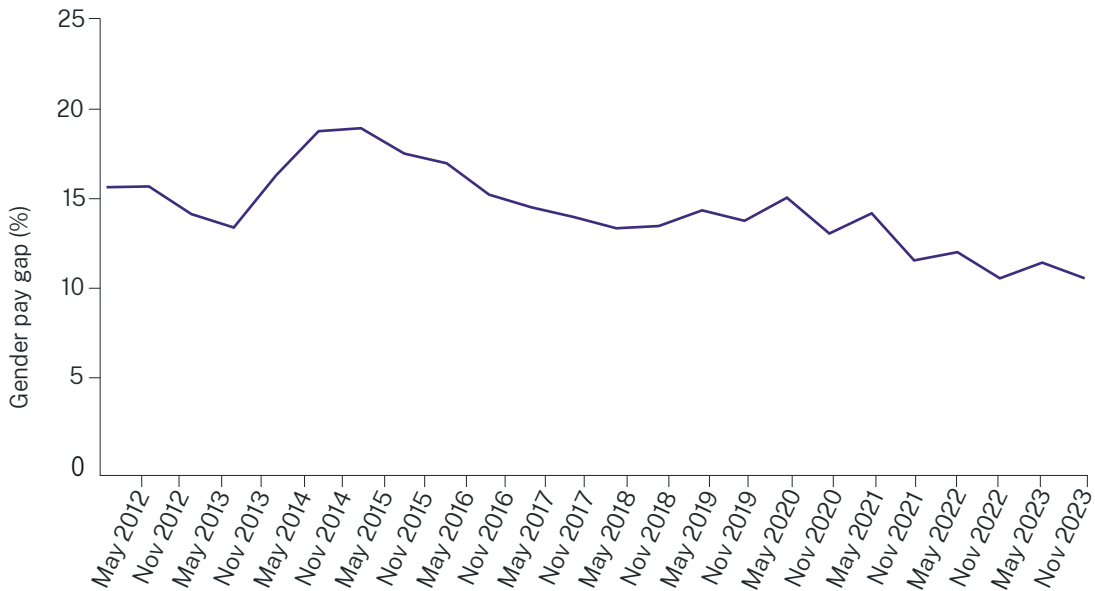
The drivers and impact of this entrenched workforce gender segregation is outlined in section 4 – Economic opportunity and advancement.

## Progress towards closing the gender pay gap in NSW

The gender pay gap refers to the difference between women's and men's full-time average earnings and is an important indicator of inequality within our economy. In NSW, women are paid on average 11.0 per cent less than men, or \$217.30 less per week.<sup>30</sup> This has narrowed from 11.8 per cent in May 2023. The gender pay gap in NSW is slightly below the national average of 12.0 per cent.<sup>31</sup>

Addressing the drivers of the gender pay gap is central to reducing it. Workforce gender segregation accounts for 24 per cent of Australia's gender pay gap.<sup>32</sup>

**Chart 2.1 – Gender pay gap, NSW, 2012-2023**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024, Average Weekly Earnings, Full Time Ordinary time earnings, NSW, November 2023.

Gender norms and stereotypes form in the early years at school and shape career choices. Gender segregation can also be addressed by making male dominated workplaces safer for women and valuing feminised workforces. ‘Greedy jobs’ are jobs that demand long hours and have limited flexibility.<sup>33</sup> These jobs require overtime, weekend or evening work. They attract higher earnings and contribute to the gender pay gap as more men work in these roles than women.<sup>34</sup> Women are less likely to enter these ‘greedy jobs’ as social norms lead to women taking on disproportionately more child care, household and other caring responsibilities and unpaid labour.<sup>35</sup> These drivers are discussed in section 4 – Economic opportunity and advancement.

## The NSW Government is the largest employer of women in Australia

As at June 2023, 66.5 per cent of the 453,310 public sector employees were women.<sup>37</sup> The occupations with the highest number of female employees were nurses (86.7 per cent), school support staff (83.7 per cent), and social and welfare professionals (84.0 per cent).<sup>38</sup>

As at June 2023, the NSW public sector gender pay gap, based on the median remuneration of non-casual employees, was 6.2 per cent.<sup>36</sup> This reflects the public sector gender pay gap prior to the NSW Government’s abolishment of the public sector wages cap which improved wages in female dominated sectors.

The NSW Government is committed to being a model employer by paying female dominated workforces in the public sector fairly and providing economic security.

Abolishment of the public sector wages cap, the 4.5 per cent pay increase in 2023-24 (including a 0.5 per cent increase to superannuation), and the record pay increase for teachers, school psychologists and counsellors, was the Government’s first step to supporting higher wages and rebuilding essential services.

Nurses received the largest pay rise in over a decade in July 2023. In October 2023, all of NSW’s 95,000 teachers received an historic pay rise making NSW teachers the best paid in the country.

The NSW Government also made 16,589 temporary teachers and support staff permanent, 85 per cent of whom are women. This significant change will improve job stability and economic security for this female dominated workforce.

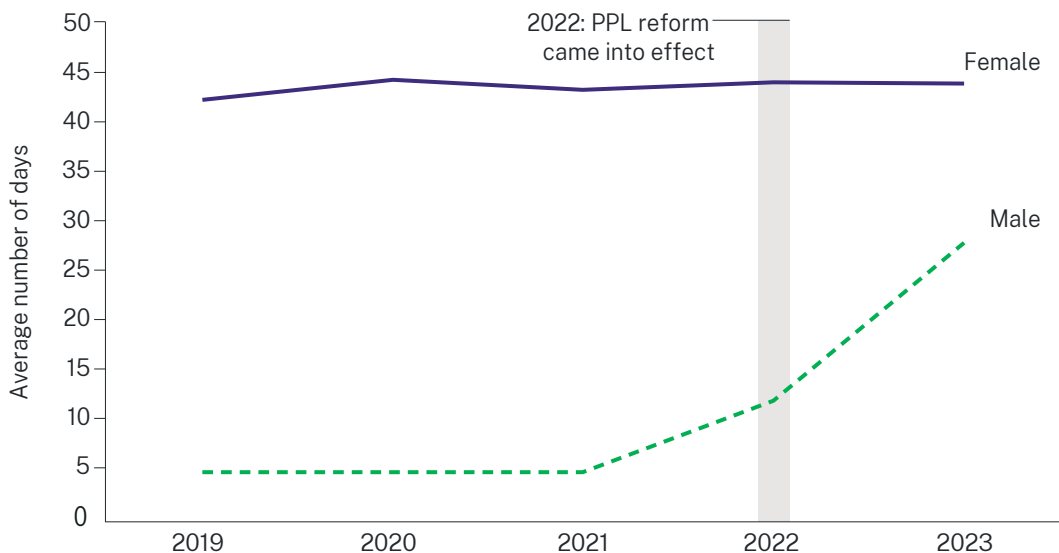
## The take up of paid parental leave by men in the public sector is increasing

The public sector paid parental leave reforms has seen an increase in the average number of days of paid parental leave taken by men.

From 2019 to 2023, the average days taken by male employees in the public sector has risen from five to 28 days.

The number of men taking parental leave in the public sector has also increased since the reforms were introduced. This is a positive trend as more men share in caring responsibilities.

**Chart 2.2 – Average number of paid parental leave days taken in public sector, by gender**



Source: NSW Treasury analysis of Paid Parental Leave (PPL) data from the NSW Public Service Commission.<sup>39</sup>



## Benefits of men caring for children

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When men provide more unpaid care it benefits families, workplaces and the economy.<sup>40</sup> Women currently do the majority of unpaid care and domestic work. In 2021, women in NSW spent on average 30.3 hours per week doing unpaid work, compared to 17.9 hours per week for men.<sup>41</sup> In 2017, just one in 20 fathers took primary parental leave in the private sector in companies with more than 100 employees.<sup>42</sup> This is low by international standards.<sup>43</sup> This care disparity contributes to gender inequalities in the labour market, which reduces lifetime wages for women and further entrenches gender stereotypes.<sup>44</sup>

There are social and economic challenges that prevent fathers from taking leave. These include limited leave options for 'secondary carers' or shared parental leave, gender stereotypes around 'breadwinner' and 'homemaker', and societal norms around fathers taking extended leave.<sup>45</sup> The gender pay gap also means men traditionally earn more in the family, making it appear less 'rational' and sometimes there may be a financial disincentive for men to take extended leave.<sup>46</sup>

Despite their low uptake of parental leave, fathers want to be more involved in the lives of their children.<sup>47</sup> Young working fathers' expectations and aspirations are evolving, with many identifying access to adequate care supports as important to a successful future at work.<sup>48</sup>

The public sector paid parental leave reforms contribute to breaking down these barriers, enabling fathers to take a more equal role in caring for their children. Notably, these reforms removed the distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' carer, meaning every parent in the NSW public sector is entitled to at least 14 weeks paid parental leave.

When men have access to and take paid care leave, gender norms shift and care is valued more broadly.<sup>49</sup> Men's participation in care also supports women's labour force participation and results in higher workforce productivity.<sup>50</sup>

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# Health and wellbeing

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3



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# Improving access to health care

## 3.1

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## 2024-25 Budget Measures

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**\$130.9  
million**

**Family Start Package  
to boost maternal and  
child health, including:**



**\$111.8  
million**

**for mental health care  
programs, including:**



**\$40.0  
million**

for early intervention  
programs and funding  
for Tresillian and  
Karitane services



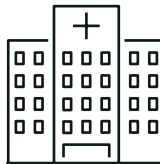
**\$30.4  
million**

to expand Community  
Mental Health teams  
across targeted areas  
including in regional  
NSW to care for those  
experiencing persistent  
and complex mental illness



**\$21.3  
million**

for the Waminda Birth  
Centre and Community  
Hub for First Nations  
women and families  
on the South Coast



**\$40.0  
million**

to reduce long stay  
hospitalisation



**\$15.0  
million**

to improve vaccine uptake  
in at-risk communities

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**Caring for communities  
and investing in health care  
that is accessible and  
high quality is a priority for  
the NSW Government.**

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Good health is fundamental to employment, with healthy people tending to be more productive in both their paid and unpaid work.<sup>51</sup> Yet women are more likely than men to have poor health during their working years.<sup>52</sup> Ensuring equitable access to quality health care services is critical to support women's workforce participation.

Poor health impacts people's participation in the workforce. Women are more likely than men to have at least one chronic condition, including a mental health condition.<sup>53</sup> Women experience higher rates of anxiety disorders and depression, and are slightly more likely than men to experience a mental disorder at some point in their life.<sup>54</sup>

Young people who are trans and gender diverse are at a higher risk of harm caused by discrimination, bullying, social exclusion and physical assault.<sup>55</sup> Trans and gender diverse young people also have a higher than average prevalence of co-occurring mental health conditions due to minority stress, including depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidality.<sup>56</sup> The NSW Government is investing **\$2.4 million to provide support to LGBTQ+ people and their families across the State**, including through The Gender Centre.

Women are more likely than men to see a general practitioner or medical specialist and more likely to be admitted to hospital.<sup>57</sup> As a result women spend more on out-of-pocket health care costs.<sup>58</sup> A recent national survey of over 2,500 women found that two-thirds of respondents reported experiencing gender bias or discrimination when seeking health care, particularly for sexual and reproductive health.<sup>59</sup>

The Government's general practitioner payroll tax reforms will help to ease cost of living pressures on women and improve their access to general practitioners.

Health and women's workforce participation are strongly linked. As a female dominated industry, women comprise 76.2 per cent of the health care and social assistance workforce.<sup>60</sup> Increased investment in health care can therefore create additional employment opportunities, particularly for women.<sup>61</sup> The health care and social assistance industry recorded the strongest growth of any industry between 2000 and 2020, with this trend expected to continue.<sup>62</sup>

The NSW Government is committed to strengthening our health workforce and improving women's experiences within our health care system.

The existing Women's Health Centre Program is delivering enhanced health care and wellbeing services to women across the State. This program has delivered 19 Women's Health Centres across both metropolitan and regional NSW, including in Western Sydney, South Coast, North Coast and the Central West. The Women's Health Centre Program provides face-to-face support to an average of 50,000 women across NSW each year, with women from low income and other priority backgrounds, including women who have experienced domestic violence, making up the majority of clients.

Existing work continues to expand services for women experiencing severe and/or complex menopause symptoms across NSW. These services will provide a pathway for women experiencing severe or complex symptoms of menopause to access menopause care through a statewide network with four clusters. Each cluster will have a medically led hub with referral sites. These include expansion of two existing sites at the Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick and the Royal North Shore Hospital in St Leonards, and two new sites in Campbelltown and Wallsend. Referral sites and hubs will be operational by mid-2024.



## Gender impact assessment case study: Vaccine coverage for hesitant and hard-to-reach communities

This Budget invests **\$15.0 million in vaccine coverage for hesitant and hard-to-reach communities**. The program will use vaccine champions from local communities.

This program promotes vaccine uptake in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, recognising that immunisation coverage varies across the NSW population. Vaccine champions from local communities who can speak community languages will help to increase knowledge, awareness and acceptance of vaccination.

A gender impact assessment of this program highlighted several gender-related barriers to immunisation. For example, religious practices or cultural values may prevent female caregivers from seeking immunisation services from male health workers. Additionally, travelling long distances to health clinics may deter women, particularly young mothers, from bringing children for immunisation.

The analysis identified that vaccine champions can assist in overcoming gender-based barriers to women and children's immunisation, by promoting accessible immunisation services from female health care workers, finding more geographically accessible immunisation service locations, and providing culturally sensitive health care providers.

The gender impact assessment also identified an opportunity to collect qualitative data from vaccine champions on gender-specific barriers to immunisation within culturally and linguistically diverse communities across NSW.

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# Increasing access to safe and stable housing

## 3.2

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## 2024-25 Budget Measures

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**\$5.1  
billion**

to build 8,400 social homes, including priority homes for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence



**\$655.0  
million**

for key worker and rental housing



**\$527.6  
million**

for crisis accommodation and homelessness support services



**\$8.4  
million**

for the Rental Commissioner to develop and enforce rental protections

The NSW Government is committed to a society where all people in NSW have access to safe, secure and stable housing that supports their economic prosperity and individual wellbeing. This Government is focused on addressing gender equality at all levels, across housing supply, rental affordability, social housing and homelessness, and key worker housing.

With a growing population, the lack of housing supply across NSW is exacerbating the housing affordability crisis.<sup>63</sup> The NSW Government is committed to confronting the housing crisis and boosting the supply of housing across our State.

## Rental affordability is a cost of living pressure

In NSW, rental affordability has deteriorated significantly, particularly for low-income households.<sup>64</sup> Rental stress is when a household pays 30 per cent or more of their income on rent.<sup>65</sup> As shown below, it is a particular problem for women.

In Greater Sydney, women can expect to spend 53.3 per cent of their before-tax income renting a unit, 11.7 percentage points more than for men (41.6 per cent). In regional NSW, women can expect to spend 39.7 per cent of their before-tax full-time earnings renting a unit, 7.8 percentage points more than for men (31.9 per cent). Table 3.1 shows that renting a house is more unaffordable than renting a unit.

**Table 3.1 – Median rental affordability ratios, by gender**

	Greater Sydney		Regional NSW	
	House rent-to-income ratio	Unit rent-to-income ratio	House rent-to-income ratio	Unit rent-to-income ratio
Male	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>41.6%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>
Female	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>47.7%</b>	<b>39.7%</b>
<b>Gender gap</b> (percentage points)	<b>14.3</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>7.8</b>

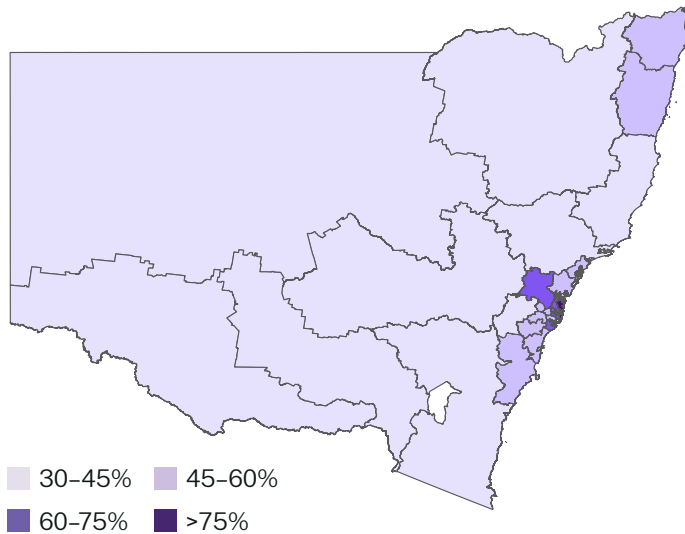
Source: CoreLogic, ABS and NSW Treasury.<sup>66</sup>



The maps below show how rental stress is experienced across the State, by Statistical Area 4 (SA4), by males and females.<sup>67</sup> The maps represent the percentage of income required to rent a typical dwelling in each

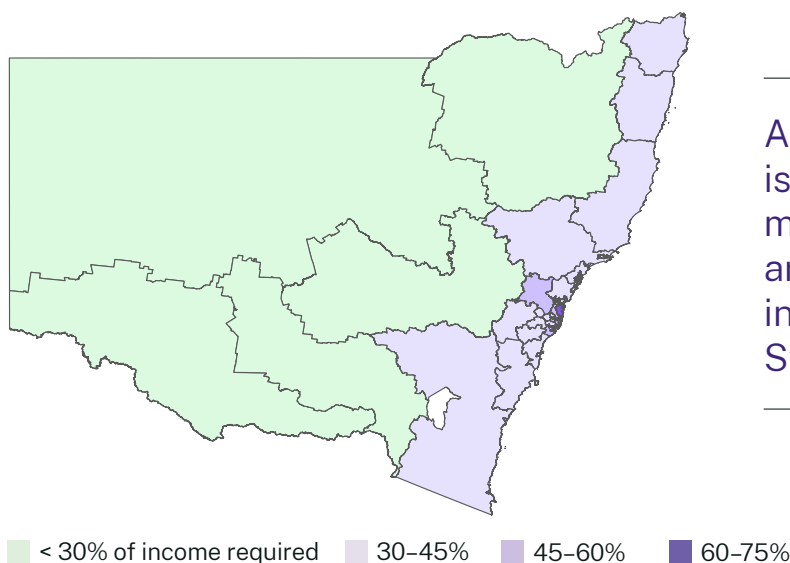
region, based on average male and female earnings, respectively. Where greater than 30 per cent of income is required for housing costs, this is generally considered housing stress.

**Figure 3.1 – Rental stress (percentage of income required) across NSW, female**



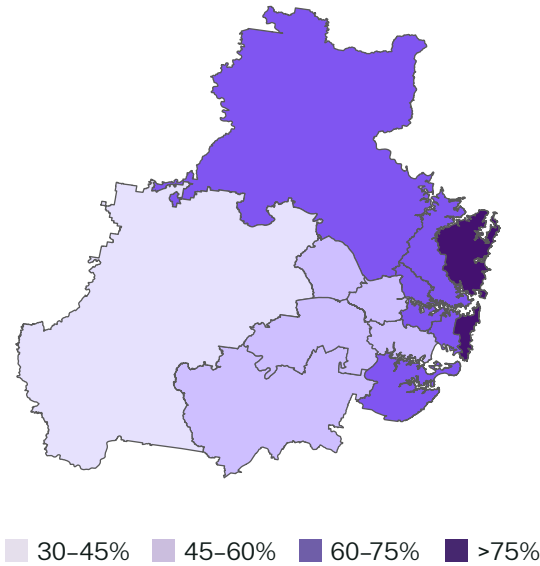
For women on average female earnings, there are very few SA4 areas in the State where they can rent a dwelling without being in rental stress.

**Figure 3.2 – Rental stress (percentage of income required) across NSW, male**



Areas where rent is 60 per cent or more of income are concentrated in the Greater Sydney region.

**Figure 3.3 – Rental stress (percentage of income required) across Greater Sydney, female**

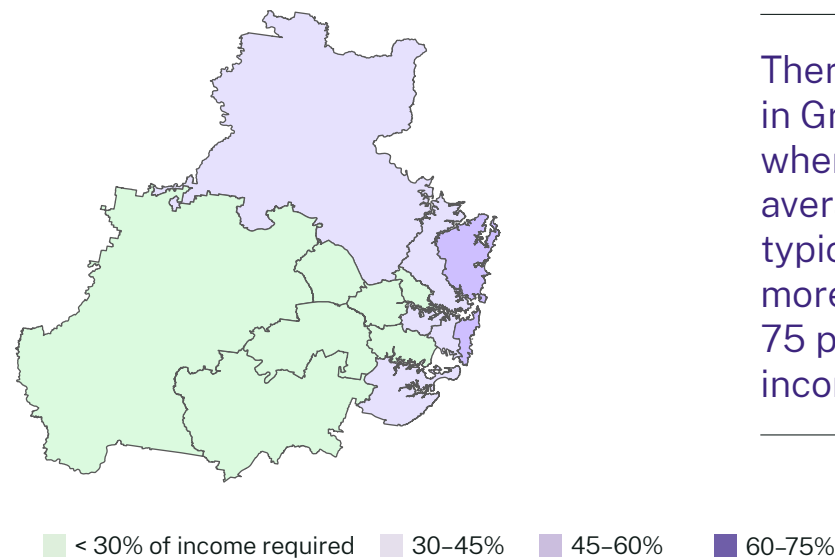


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In Greater Sydney women experience rental stress in more areas than men.

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**Figure 3.4 – Rental stress (percentage of income required) across Greater Sydney, male**



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There are no areas in Greater Sydney where men on average earnings typically spend more than 75 per cent of their income on rent.

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In NSW, more than a third of the population rent. More people are renting and renting for longer – many of whom will rent for their whole lives. Some renters are worse off than others, through increased financial pressure and lack of financial flexibility: single parent families, people in lower socio-economic brackets, people with a disability and older people. Gender impact research shows women are over-represented in some of these categories.

Women have lower rates of home ownership in Australia compared to men, have equal to higher rates of renting and are more likely to be the head of a sole parent family – over-representing their exposure to impacts from the current rental market challenges and housing insecurity compared to their male counterparts.

- Trina Jones, NSW Rental Commissioner

The NSW Government is committed to addressing rental affordability. In August 2023, Trina Jones was appointed as the first Rental Commissioner in NSW. The Rental Commissioner has been established to work closely with government, consumer affairs, stakeholders and renters to make renting in NSW fairer, more affordable and more secure.

In Sydney and some regional locations there are very few local government areas that are affordable for essential workers (teachers, nurses, police officers, social workers, ambulance officers, aged and disability care workers and child care workers) to rent in.<sup>68</sup> This emphasises the pressing need for targeted housing solutions for our essential service workforce.

The NSW Government is working to ensure more of our key workers, some of which are highly feminised professions such as nurses, child care and welfare support workers, have access to housing in areas close to their places of employment.

This Budget invests **\$655.0 million for key worker and rental housing.**

Key investments include:

- \$450.0 million for a Key Worker Build-to-Rent Program to be delivered by Landcom across Sydney
- \$200.1 million for key health worker accommodation to help recruit and retain key health workers across rural and regional areas of the State.



**\$8.4  
million**

for the Rental  
Commissioner to  
develop and enforce  
rental protections



**\$11.8  
million**

to support the growing  
number of renters in  
apartments, through  
an expanded Strata  
and Property Services  
Commissioner

## Women are overrepresented in social housing and homelessness services

Over 34,000 women and children are on the social housing waiting list, making up 59.5 per cent of total applicants.<sup>69</sup> More than 5,000 of these women are assessed as in urgent need.<sup>70</sup> These are known as priority applicants, with allocations made on the basis of greatest need for social housing. Applicants may have more than one of the specified characteristics.



# \$260.0 million

for homeless people and families who need safe shelter and support

**Chart 3.1 – Characteristics of female social housing applicants, by select group, June 2023**



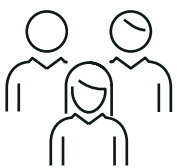
Source: NSW Department of Communities and Justice 2023, Annual Statistical Report 2022-23.

## Supporting people to access social housing

This Budget invests **\$5.1 billion in social housing** across the State. The NSW Government will build 8,400 social homes, of which 6,200 will be new homes and 2,200 will be replacement homes. At least 50 per cent of these new homes will be prioritised for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. A further 33,500 homes will be repaired. This is the largest ever investment by a NSW Government in social housing.

A consequence of deteriorating rental affordability is that the numbers of women experiencing homelessness has continued to rise. Of the 68,388 people accessing specialist homelessness services in 2022-23 in NSW, 59.2 per cent were female.<sup>71</sup> The three main reasons for women seeking assistance in NSW were family and domestic violence (29.1 per cent), housing crisis (20.9 per cent), and financial difficulties (9.6 per cent).<sup>72</sup>

There are other gendered barriers to accessing homelessness services. For example, gender diverse people experience particular barriers to housing stability due to the highly gendered nature of accommodation options in the homelessness services sector.<sup>73</sup> In addition, while 58.2 per cent of people experiencing homelessness are men,<sup>74</sup> men only make up 40.8 per cent of presentations to Specialist Homelessness Services.<sup>75</sup>



**\$250.0  
million**

to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

This highlights potential gaps in men accessing the support they need.

This Budget invests **\$527.6 million for crisis housing and homelessness services**, including:

- over \$260.0 million to provide homeless people and families who need safe shelter with temporary accommodation and support to move to more stable housing
- over \$250.0 million to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including those leaving correctional centres and mental health services. This will also secure funding for Specialist Homelessness Services and the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector for homelessness services.

In 2022-23, 23.1 per cent of people seeking Specialist Homelessness Services in NSW reported domestic and family violence as the main reason they were seeking assistance.<sup>76</sup> 75.4 per cent of these were women.<sup>77</sup> Safe, affordable, long-term housing is critical to establishing a life free from abuse.

Since 2022, the NSW Government has approved the development of 39 new crisis refuges for women and children. The locations of these new refuges are targeted to areas of unmet demand for crisis accommodation. Seven of the new refuges are now operational, and the remaining refuges will progressively open once construction is completed. Additional new refuges will be approved through another round of procurement that is underway. The provision of these much-needed refuges will ensure victim-survivors have access to the support services they need to stay safe and plan for their future.

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# Reducing gender-based violence

## 3.3

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## 2024-25 Budget Measures

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# \$245.6 million

**to support domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors and expand programs that reduce violence against women and children. This includes:**



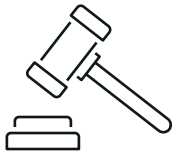
## \$48.1 million

for specialist workers to provide trauma-informed support for children accompanying their mothers to refuges



## \$48.0 million

to roll out the Staying Home Leaving Violence program statewide and to expand the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service



## \$45.0 million

to improve bail laws and justice system responses to make it more difficult for serious domestic violence offenders to get bail



## \$29.6 million

for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service to support victim-survivors to navigate the justice system



## \$10.0 million

for Men's Behaviour Change programs supporting men to develop strategies to prevent the use of violence



## \$8.1 million

for the 'All in' early childhood pilot, to teach young children about healthy relationships

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The NSW Government is committed to a secure society where people live peacefully and are safe at home and in the community. Domestic and family violence affects

everyone, resulting in significant economic, social and health costs for victim-survivors as well as the community more broadly.

Women are disproportionately more likely to experience domestic and family violence, with one in four women in NSW experiencing violence, emotional abuse or economic abuse by a cohabiting partner after the age of 15.<sup>78</sup> Despite efforts to address domestic and family violence, this issue persists, reflected in a 5.5 per cent increase in domestic violence assaults in NSW in the two years to March 2024.<sup>79</sup>

Domestic and family violence can have long-lasting consequences. Women who have left violent relationships are likely to experience considerable financial stress, and often lifelong injuries to their mental health or psychological wellbeing.<sup>80</sup> Additionally, one in two victim-survivors reported that domestic and family violence impacted their career progression and opportunities.<sup>81</sup>

The impact of domestic and family violence on women's lifetime financial security is severe and multifaceted. Approximately 16 per cent of women in NSW have experienced financial abuse by a partner.<sup>82</sup> This can take various forms, from racking up significant debt on shared accounts or joint credit cards, to refusing to pay child support payments when required.<sup>83</sup> The cumulative effects of these behaviours can have a significant impact on women's economic security.

In 2023-24, the NSW Government committed \$8.1 million to the Redfern Legal Centre to support ongoing delivery of the Financial Abuse Service. Since 1 July 2023, the service has assisted 281 women dealing with financial abuse.

Leaving abusive relationships is also costly for women. Around two-thirds of women who have experienced violence by a previous partner have left property or assets behind when moving out of the home.<sup>84</sup> Domestic and family violence is the main reason women and their children leave their home, with some women becoming homeless as a result.<sup>85</sup> Notably, a lack of affordable housing alternatives is a key contributor to women returning to perpetrators.<sup>86</sup>

The NSW Government remains committed to boosting investment in domestic and family violence support services and improving access to initiatives that help victim-survivors rebuild their lives. This Budget invests **\$48.0 million to roll out the Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) program statewide and to expand the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service (IDFVS).**

SHLV is an intensive case management service that supports women and their children to remain safe in their home after leaving a violent relationship. It provides need-based supports that include safety and risk assessments, security upgrades, financial assistance, legal help and employment support.

In 2022, a formal evaluation found that the SHLV program effectively contributes to the long-term safety and housing stability of women and children who have left a violent and abusive relationship.<sup>87</sup>

IDFVS offers a multi-agency, integrated and coordinated case management response for families in high-risk target groups and communities.

## Multicultural Centre for Women’s and Family Safety

In 2024, the NSW Government invested \$4.4 million over three years to partner with Settlement Services International to open a new Multicultural Centre. The centre will provide specialist, culturally responsive support to migrant and refugee women and children who are at risk of, or experiencing, domestic, family and sexual violence.

The new centre, based in South-Western Sydney, commenced operations in April 2024. It provides statewide services, including outreach into regional and rural NSW.

Settlement Services International works with multicultural communities to address various forms of violence that are more likely to affect women, children and families from migrant and refugee backgrounds, such as migration-related abuse, multi-perpetrator violence, dowry abuse, forced marriage and domestic servitude.

**\$10.0 million has also been committed to support Men’s Behaviour Change Programs** to enable men to recognise their violent behaviour and develop strategies to prevent the use of violence.

The NSW Government recognises a whole-of-government response is essential to address domestic, family and sexual violence.

In 2023, NSW became the first state in Australia to appoint a standalone Women’s Safety Commissioner. The Commissioner is helping to support collaboration and coordination across Government, the non-government sector and the broader community, as well as giving victim-survivors a greater voice in the development of policies and programs.

## NSW Women’s Safety Commissioner

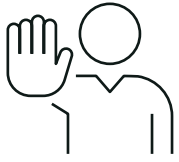
Dr Hannah Tonkin was appointed as the inaugural Women’s Safety Commissioner in 2023. The Commissioner provides leadership, oversight and strategic advice across the whole of NSW Government to strengthen responses to domestic, family and sexual violence. She also promotes awareness-raising, education and public engagement to deliver improved women’s safety outcomes, and works to amplify the voices of victim-survivors to ensure their perspectives inform government policies and decision making.

Commissioner Tonkin launched her inaugural Strategic Plan, *Working together to address domestic, family and sexual violence*, in March 2024.

Working together to address domestic, family and sexual violence

NSW Women’s Safety Commissioner  
Strategic Plan 2024–2027





**\$38.3  
million**

for the implementation  
of NSW's first  
dedicated primary  
prevention strategy  
**Pathways to Prevention**

NSW introduced  
the first Australian  
standalone offence for  
coercive control through  
the *Crimes Legislation  
Amendment (Coercive  
Control) Act 2022*, with  
the new offence coming  
into effect from July 2024.

This Budget invests **\$38.3 million for the implementation of Pathways to Prevention: NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027**. This strategy aims to address the social norms around gender inequality as the key driver of domestic, family and sexual violence.

NSW introduced the first Australian standalone offence for coercive control through the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022*, with the new offence coming into effect from July 2024. Implementation of the reforms is being overseen by the Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce, led by the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice and supported by multi-disciplinary reference groups to provide advice and recommendations.

At a national level, joint efforts towards coercive control reforms and ending gender-based violence are also progressing. In 2023, the Australian Government released the *National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence*, outlining a shared understanding of the common features and impacts of coercive control, as well as guiding considerations to inform responses to this issue.

Further, \$47.8 million in Australian Government funding under the Domestic and Sexual Violence National Partnership Agreement 2023-25 will be invested in early intervention initiatives, specialist services, innovative pilot programs and workforce capability development projects.



## Gender impact assessment case study: Pathways to Prevention: NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027

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The Pathways to Prevention: NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027 aims to address gender inequality as a key driver of domestic, family and sexual violence.

The gender impact assessment of the strategy highlighted the disproportionate impact of domestic, family and sexual violence experienced by some groups, including women with a disability, First Nations women, older women, migrant and refugee women, and LGBTIQ+ people. It also emphasised how challenging harmful gender stereotypes will help lead to more positive, equal, and respectful relationships.

The implementation of the strategy is expected to help shift community attitudes and enhance support for gender equality, assisting to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence in the long-term. It will complement services offered at other points in the cycle of violence, including those that intervene early by targeting specific risk factors for violence, provide crisis response support for victim-survivors, and focus on changing the behaviour of perpetrators to reduce re-offending.

The NSW Government has passed new laws to strengthen community safety by making it harder for alleged serious domestic violence offenders to get bail and ensuring all bail decisions are made by magistrates or judges.

The new laws require people charged with serious domestic violence offences against intimate partners to 'show cause' why they should not be detained until their case is determined. If granted bail, those charged with serious domestic and family violence offences will be subject to electronic monitoring.

The amendments also strengthen the unacceptable risk test so that before granting bail decision makers must consider:

- 'red flag' behaviour that could constitute domestic abuse, and
- the views of domestic and family violence victims and their family members about safety concerns.

Up to six additional magistrates will be employed and audio-visual link facilities will be available to support remote bail hearings.

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# Improving resilience to natural disasters

## 3.4

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## 2024-25 Budget Measures

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# \$2.4 million

for the statewide Disaster Response Legal Service,  
the only specialist disaster legal service within NSW

Natural disasters have immense economic and personal costs to communities. Climate change is increasing the risk and severity of bushfires, storms and floods in NSW,<sup>88</sup> requiring communities to adapt, prepare for and respond to these events. An inclusive approach to building community resilience is needed, recognising that natural disasters may have gendered impacts.

For instance, research indicates that men and women respond differently to bushfires when perceiving, preparing and responding to risks.<sup>89</sup> Men often focus more on ‘hard’ preparations such as setting up sprinkler systems, whereas women tend to plan household responses to ensure the safety of children and other vulnerable household members.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, men are more likely to want to stay and defend property, while women are more likely to leave, contributing to the overrepresentation of males in bushfire fatalities.<sup>91</sup>

Natural disasters also have a profound impact on mental health, with studies showing men affected by bushfire are 30 per cent more likely than those not affected by natural disaster to report moderate to severe depressive symptoms.<sup>92</sup>

Recovery efforts can be influenced by traditional gender norms, which often associate women with caring responsibilities, potentially exacerbating women’s share of unpaid work in the aftermath of natural disasters.<sup>93</sup>

NSW Government is investing \$5.7 billion, including Australian Government co-contributions, to continue natural disaster recovery and support programs.

This Budget invests **\$2.4 million for the Disaster Response Legal Service (DRLS).**

This service, provided through Legal Aid NSW, is the only dedicated specialist legal service for communities impacted by disasters across NSW. The DRLS delivers services where they are most needed, adopting a multi-channel approach, including direct frontline services across NSW at Recovery Centres, telephone legal advice, community legal education, a helpline, referrals and a dedicated website.

A gender impact assessment highlighted that women are more likely to seek assistance from the DRLS and that First Nations clients prefer face-to-face services. This highlights the importance of disaster recovery centres and assistance points to be culturally safe, to support access for First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse people.

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# Economic opportunity and advancement

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# Improving access to education and training opportunities

## 4.1

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## 2024-25 Budget Measures

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**\$16.3 million**

available in 2024-25 for fee free apprenticeships and traineeships

Women represent 12 per cent of apprentices and trainees in non-traditional trades.<sup>94</sup>

The NSW Government is committed to a society that enables everyone to realise their potential through training and education.

Equal access to education and training opportunities empowers individuals to secure employment and improve their economic outcomes.

Addressing gender inequality in segregated sectors begins in education and training. This involves encouraging women to participate in male dominated industries and encouraging men to participate in traditionally female dominated sectors through their educational choices.

University and VET courses often include a mandatory requirement to undertake unpaid placements. This can lead to 'placement poverty,' the financial stress that results from having to forego paid work or relocate away from home to meet these requirements.<sup>95</sup>

Placement poverty is highly gendered as placements are more often needed in the feminised sectors of care and teaching.<sup>96</sup>

The NSW Government is committed to rebuilding essential services facing critical shortages with allowances now available to Student Police Officers to study at the Goulburn Police Academy.

From March 2024, Student Police Officers will receive up to \$30,894 over the 16-week study period. Current classes at the academy will also receive pro-rata scholarships. This measure will unlock opportunities for a more diverse range of recruits including mature age students, women – particularly women with families, and people from low-income households who simply can't afford to study for four months with no income.

This Budget is also investing an additional **\$8.9 million in 2024-25, to bring the total investment up to \$16.3 million, for fee free arrangements for apprenticeships and traineeships.** The Fee Free Apprentices and Traineeships program will remove student fees of up to \$2,000 for apprentices and up to \$1,000 for trainees.

The NSW Government is committed to supporting students, by continuing the Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarship. The 2024 Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarships is a \$2.25 million program, which will support 150 NSW apprentices experiencing financial or personal hardship while completing their work and training, with a \$15,000 scholarship given over three years. Since 2014, the program has supported over 900 apprentices across NSW, including 275 female apprentices in trade occupations.

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# Increasing workforce participation

## 4.2

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# 2024-25 Budget Measures

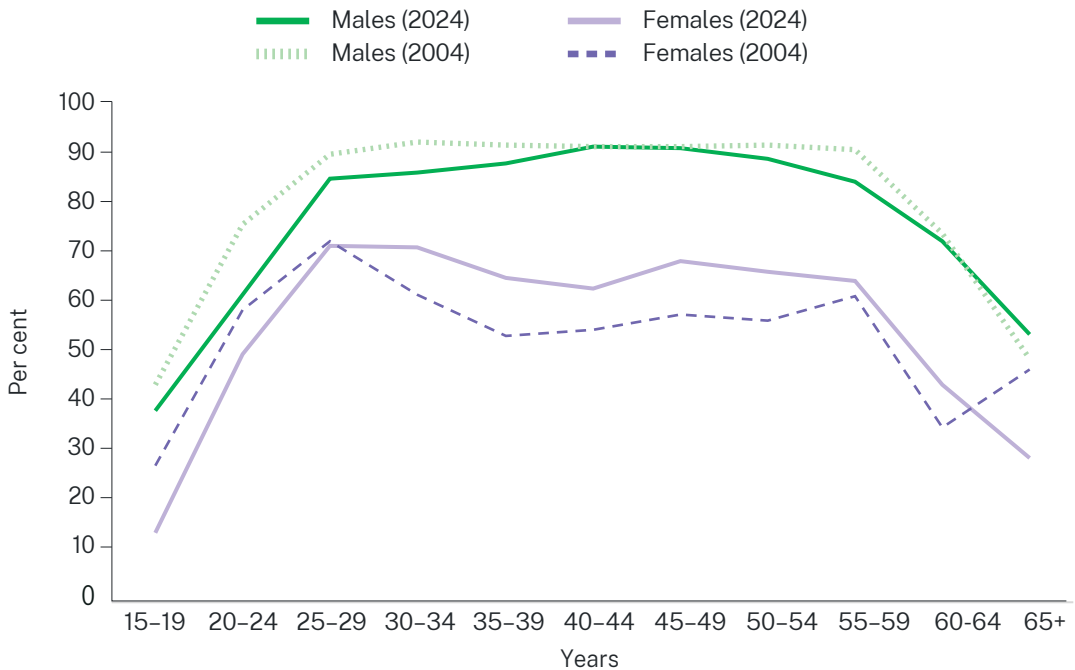


## \$2.0 million

in 2024-25 for the Return to Work Pathways Program to help remove barriers for women entering or re-entering the workforce

The NSW Government is committed to a dynamic and resilient economy and society.

**Chart 4.1 – Proportion of employed persons working full-time, by age and gender, NSW**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024, Labour Force Australia Detailed, April 2024.

Chart 4.1 demonstrates the impact that caring for children has on women's working life. The gap in full-time work widens considerably

between the ages of 25-29 years and 40-44 years, around typical child-rearing years. This gap has an impact on lifetime earnings.



Increasing women's workforce participation and economic security is a key driver of economic growth and is essential to supporting the long-term prosperity of NSW. Ongoing barriers to women's workforce participation mean women earn less, accumulate less in superannuation and are more at risk of long-term financial insecurity.<sup>97</sup> Removing barriers that prevent women from equally participating in work will improve gender equality and benefit our economy.<sup>98</sup>

The gendered division of unpaid care is a key barrier that restricts the types of jobs and roles available to women. Currently, caring for children is the primary reason women in NSW cite for not being available to start a job or work more hours.<sup>99</sup>

The NSW Government is delivering the largest ever investment in public preschools. The sites for the 100 public preschools have been chosen and the first at Gulyangarri Public School is set to open in late 2024.

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Caring for children disproportionately impacts women, with 31.6 per cent of women in NSW stating it was the main reason for not actively seeking work, compared to 2.2 per cent of men.<sup>100</sup>

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Of the 100 new preschools, half will be located in Western Sydney and half across regional NSW.

The NSW Government is continuing the \$60.0 million investment for new and upgraded non-government preschools across NSW.





To support families with the cost of living, the NSW Government will continue to provide up to \$4,220 per year in fee relief for parents and carers of three to five year olds in community and mobile preschools.

In addition, \$500-\$2,110 in fee relief is available to parents and carers of children aged three to five years attending eligible preschool programs in long day care centres. It is estimated that over 200,000 enrolments will be eligible for NSW Government fee relief in 2024.

In 2023, the NSW Government launched the Flexible Initiatives Trial (FIT), a \$20.0 million investment which aims to increase access to early childhood education and care for working parents, including exploring new ways of making drop-off and pick-ups easier for working parents.

The FIT funds early childhood education and care services to test and trial new or adapted operating models that address key barriers to parents accessing care, including longer hours, weekend operating hours and additional places in areas where they are needed most.

The first round of successful FIT applications for funding has been announced with 16 services across metropolitan and regional NSW receiving a total of more than \$2.8 million. The second round of funding is currently open, and applications close in early July 2024.

First Nations women in NSW can experience distinct barriers to employment, making access to economic opportunities more difficult. These include intergenerational trauma and lack of intergenerational wealth.<sup>101</sup>

First Nations women are also more likely than First Nations men or non-Indigenous women to be carers and to provide care to multiple people, meaning the challenges they face are amplified.<sup>102</sup>

Other barriers to achieving and sustaining employment outcomes exist for different cohorts of women resulting from complex needs. This includes women affected by domestic and family violence.<sup>103</sup>

## Gender impact assessment case study: Return to Work Pathways Program

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The NSW Government remains committed to increasing women's economic security by removing barriers to workforce participation.

The gender impact assessment of this program identified barriers that women face at all life stages that impact their choices and opportunities to enter, re-enter and stay in the workforce.

This results in poor economic outcomes such as women working fewer hours, being more likely to be underemployed and spending longer periods of time out of the workforce. A review of the service landscape found that there is demand for a more specialised, intensive, wrap-around service for women experiencing multiple barriers to employment.

The gender analysis emphasised the importance of the Return to Work Pathways Program being designed to accommodate different and intersecting needs of women across NSW. This includes ensuring that funded organisations have experience working with target communities, including women with disability, First Nations women and regional women, as these groups have been previously underrepresented.

It is anticipated that the Return to Work Pathways Program will have a positive impact on women's workforce participation, which is a key gender equality goal. This will be achieved by delivering tailored initiatives to women experiencing complex and persistent barriers to employment.

Women with disabilities face barriers including inaccessible workplaces.<sup>104</sup> Further, women from refugee and non-English speaking migrant backgrounds face barriers including having to choose between learning English and looking for work, with limited access to specialised services.<sup>105</sup>

In this Budget, the NSW Government is investing **\$2.0 million in 2024-25 to continue the Return to Work Pathways Program**. The Return to Work Pathways Program has already supported more than 1,000 women to become job-ready and secure sustainable employment.

The NSW Government has made progress on the Future Women's Jobs Academy (\$5.8 million investment over two years). The program opened for applications in May 2024 and the first intake is set to commence this year. This investment will support 1,000 women over two years to build their confidence, capabilities, and connections needed to commence their job search, secure employment pathways and thrive at work. The program will provide access to women from communities that have lower workforce participation rates and face intersecting barriers to entering and progressing in the workforce, including First Nations women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disability and women living in regional, rural and remote areas.

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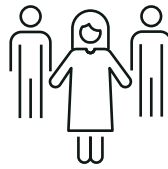
# Increasing workplace safety

## 4.3

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Harmful workplace behaviours, including sexual harassment and bullying, can prevent people from reaching their full potential in the workforce. Sexual harassment in the workplace is unacceptable, however approximately one in three Australians reported having been sexually harassed at work between 2017 and 2022.<sup>106</sup> Power disparities in society and the workplace enable sexual harassment, with gender inequality being a key driver.<sup>107</sup>



1 in 3

Australians report having been harassed at work. Sexual harassment in the workplace is unacceptable.

Women in Australia are more likely than men to experience workplace sexual harassment, with 41 per cent of women compared to 26 per cent of men experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace between 2017 and 2022.<sup>108</sup>

The NSW Government is committed to eliminating workplace sexual harassment. In October 2023, SafeWork NSW, the State's work health and safety (WHS) regulator, launched a four-year Respect at Work Strategy on preventing sexual harassment. Through this strategy, NSW workplaces are being supported to take proactive action to prevent sexual harassment.

SafeWork NSW will also undertake greater enforcement action to ensure workplaces address sexual harassment as a WHS issue. The strategy received international recognition by the United Nations International Labour Organization in January 2024.



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# Reducing workforce gender segregation

## 4.4

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# 2024-25 Budget Measures

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## \$9.7 million

in 2024-25 to establish the portable long service leave scheme for community sector workers

Segregation between women and men across industries, occupations and positions of leadership is persistent in the NSW labour market. This restricts choice for individuals, results in gender gaps in earnings, reduces economic security for women and causes a misalignment of skills and talents, all of which impede productivity and economic growth.<sup>109</sup>

Occupational and industrial gender segregation accounts for almost a quarter of the gender pay gap,<sup>110</sup> with recent research highlighting that gender differences in pay within the same occupation also contributes significantly.<sup>111</sup> More gender diversity across workplaces would support the productivity and prosperity of the NSW economy.<sup>112</sup>

## Feminised industries are historically undervalued

Feminised industries are those that are female dominated and often associated with traditional gendered expectations. Feminised industries include health care, social assistance, education and community services. These feminised industries and occupations are essential to the NSW community and economy but are lower paid and historically undervalued.<sup>113</sup> This undervaluation stems from gendered norms where work value is assessed against assumptions about the role of women as carers and the normalisation of women's unpaid care work.<sup>114</sup>

The undervaluation of feminised occupations and industries leads to certain jobs attracting lower status, wages, and other fringe benefits. Addressing these factors will help make these essential jobs more attractive, some of which are facing skills shortages including child care, nurses and nursing support and personal care workers.<sup>115</sup>

Care and education workforces in NSW are a priority for the NSW Government. Work has been undertaken, at a whole-of-government level, to better understand the long-term trends at these workplaces and the experiences of workers, including looking at the experiences in NSW and other jurisdictions. These workforces are predominantly female dominated and the work will help inform NSW policy directions and programs into the future to support the economic outcomes of women.

The NSW Government is also investing **\$1.0 billion for school maintenance and minor upgrades to work through the multi-year backlog of works.** This investment will provide a better work environment for school teachers (77.8 per cent female) and school support staff (83.7 per cent female).<sup>116</sup>

## Better working conditions for our essential workers

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In the 2023-24 NSW Budget, the NSW Government committed to strengthening our feminised industries, particularly those where government is a key employer, including nurses, teachers, and school-based support staff.

The NSW Government delivered a 4.5 per cent pay increase to public sector employees in 2023-24, inclusive of superannuation.

This Budget continues to rebuild public services by supporting essential workers, addressing critical staff vacancies, collaborating with the State's workforce and delivering long-term wage growth.

The 2024-25 Budget provides for a 10.5 per cent increase to remuneration over three years (inclusive of superannuation) for more than 400,000 public sector workers, of which 66.5 per cent are women. It is an offer that provides real wage increases, and is designed to attract, reward and retain essential workers.

Teachers in NSW received an historic pay rise in October 2023. Starting salaries increased from \$75,791 to \$85,000 and salaries for top-of-the-scale teachers increased from \$113,042 to \$122,100.

The NSW Government has exceeded its election commitment to convert 16,000 temporary teachers and support staff to permanent positions. 16,589 temporary teachers and support staff accepted a permanent position at their current school, 85 per cent of whom are women. This work offers security to our State's teachers, boosting women's economic security and prosperity.

The NSW Government is delivering on its commitment to support a strong health workforce. As at April 2024, the NSW public sector nursing workforce has grown to a record 55,500 – an increase of 2,100 over 12 months.

The NSW Government is investing up to \$121.9 million over five years for the Tertiary Health Study Subsidy Program. Since its launch, the first 1,300 nursing graduates and students have received offers. This includes 473 new nursing students being offered the \$4,000 per year scholarship and 840 graduating nursing students who have commenced employment with NSW Health being offered the \$8,000 one-off payment. This is part of the NSW Government's plan to attract future health care workers to the NSW workforce.

The NSW Government also made 1,112 full-time equivalent temporary nursing and midwifery roles permanent. This ensures the continued delivery of essential health care services and strengthens the financial security of a female dominated workforce.

The Government has already delivered professional rates of pay for paramedics in recognition of the move towards university qualification and increased registration requirements, plus expansion of the scope of paramedicine.

The community sector is a major employer with a highly female dominated workforce. Employing more than 240,000 workers in NSW, with 80 per cent women,<sup>117</sup> and a quarter over 55 years old. By 2030, the sector is estimated to grow by up to 62,000 jobs.<sup>118</sup> This sector is vital in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our community. This includes providing essential homelessness, domestic and family violence, and child protection services and critical supports through bushfires, droughts, floods and other major disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

To support the female dominated community sector, the NSW Government is investing **\$9.7 million in 2024-25 to establish the portable long service leave scheme**. This scheme will enable community sector workers to accrue leave based on time employed in the sector, rather than time employed by a single employer, ensuring essential community service workers will have timely and fair access to long service benefits.

The NSW Government is also delivering on its election commitment to deliver job security and funding certainty for the non-government community services sector. Short-term government contracts to the non-government sector contribute to uncertainty around financial viability and continuity, impacting the services available to support communities when they need it most. It also impacts the workforce, lowering the job security for thousands of women across the State, as well as creating recruitment and retention challenges. Survey results of 398 community sector organisations in NSW found half of all employees in the sector are in insecure employment, including casual or fixed-term employment.<sup>119</sup>

To address this, the Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty (SJFC) Leadership Group has been established. Consultation with

government agencies and the sector has been undertaken and a draft SJFC roadmap is being developed.

The NSW Government is also committed to passing on the 2024 Fair Work Commission's minimum wage decision to community sector contracts. Providing the community sector with greater funding certainty will support the accessibility of services as service providers can plan future service delivery and retain staff by offering more secure employment arrangements.

## Priority industries need more diverse workforces

Encouraging women to join male dominated industries is vital to help address the current skills shortages and to create more inclusive and diverse workplaces.

The NSW economy will change significantly over the next 40 years, with advances in technology supporting a more productive economy.<sup>120</sup> Several priority sectors in NSW are important to our future prosperity, including manufacturing, agrifood, clean economy, technology, health and life sciences, defence and aerospace.<sup>121</sup> Ensuring equal gender representation in these growing sectors will enable more diverse problem solving and innovation as well as creating more productive and inclusive industries.

Manufacturing is the seventh largest employing industry in NSW, yet only 34.2 per cent of the workforce are women.<sup>122</sup> The NSW Government is committed to rebuilding the manufacturing sector through buying locally made content and encouraging skilled workforce growth. This commitment provides valuable opportunities to improve gender equality within the sector.

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# Participation and empowerment

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5



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# Increasing participation in community life

## 5.1

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## 2024-25 Budget Measures

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**\$73.0  
million**

**to support social cohesion and community harmony through Multicultural NSW, including:**



**\$88.8  
million**

**package for the NSW Office of Sport including \$1.0 million for continuing women's sport initiatives**

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**\$7.5  
million**

in 2024-25 for Supporting Community Language Services



**\$4.0  
million**

to expand the Government's community resilience programs

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The NSW Government is committed to a society that supports connections with family, friends, community and promotes diversity and culture. A society where people of all genders participate in and benefit from community life.

Women contribute significantly to community life through both formal volunteering roles, and unpaid caring for children, the sick, elderly and people with disabilities.<sup>123</sup>

'Social production' describes the value generated from social contributions, such as: volunteering and unpaid charity

work, unpaid education and care of children and unpaid care of the sick, elderly, and people with disabilities.<sup>124</sup> These contributions hold society together and are critical to social cohesion. Time-use survey data reveals that women spend more time on these activities,<sup>125</sup> and when they are assigned value the significance of their economic contribution becomes clearer.

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**Australia's social production has been estimated to be valued at \$288 billion in 2021 and research identifies that women generate 66 per cent of this value.<sup>126</sup>**

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The NSW Government celebrates the achievements of women contributing to social cohesion across the State, through its NSW Women of the Year Awards. In 2024, 428 nominations were received for the Awards, surpassing the 387 received in 2023. Recognition is awarded across six categories, including NSW Community Hero, NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year and NSW Regional Woman of the Year.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that places of worship are safe spaces. The Safe Places for Faith Communities Program is part of an existing \$15.0 million program and election commitment, providing a \$5.0 million grant to be shared across 103 communities and faith organisations. The program takes a resilience-based approach to safety, supporting prevention, preparedness and recovery measures at places where faith communities gather.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that women and girls can benefit from participating in community sporting life. Across NSW, the Level the Playing Field program has approved 26 grants or new and upgraded sports facilities, including amenities and lighting improvements. Based on information provided by successful applicants, the program is expected to increase participation among women and girls at the respective facilities by an average of 57 per cent.<sup>127</sup>

Applicants are required to provide an Equitable Access and Usage policy that demonstrates how they will effectively drive gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure to improve outcomes for women and girls in addition to facility designs that meet universal design standards. This will encourage participation and gender equality.

The NSW Government is providing an **\$88.8 million package for the NSW Office of Sport to support grassroots sports** in new communities, including delivering women's sport initiatives.

This Budget invests **\$73.0 million in a set of programs that support multicultural communities in NSW**. The programs include interpreting and translation services and job-readiness, frontline community responders, development of an anti-racism strategy, capacity building to support social cohesion and community harmony, and support to newly arrived migrants and refugees.







## Gender impact assessment case study: Supporting community language services

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The gender impact assessment identified that women from migrant and refugee backgrounds with limited English language skills face barriers in accessing government services. Inaccessibility of services is compounded by the intersectional disadvantage these women face.

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity, for example race and gender, can expose them to amplified forms of disadvantage or advantage. It recognises that there are many facets to a person's identity.

To address barriers to accessing government services, consideration will be given to the times that interpreter and translator training is run and community events are held to ensure accessibility for migrant and refugee women. A group of female interpreters and translators will be trained to better assist clients experiencing domestic and family violence. Working with funded community partners to improve gender disaggregated data collection at events, as well as improved data collection at Multicultural NSW training, was identified as an opportunity to support a greater understanding of who is accessing these activities.

This Budget measure will support more women to access interpreter and translator services to access jobs within this sector, and will work to better understand the gendered participation in training, social cohesion and community harmony activities.

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# Increasing gender diversity in decision making and leadership

## 5.2

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Improving gender and broader diversity at decision making and leadership levels means government is more reflective of the community that it serves. Diverse leadership and representation is important when communities experience events and crises that have disproportionate or specific impacts on particular cohorts.<sup>128</sup> This includes people of different genders, First Nations identity, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, cultural background and geographic location.

Diverse representation means government is better placed to have a diversity of ideas, capabilities and cultural intelligence to navigate technological, social, economic and geopolitical changes.<sup>129</sup>

Recognising the benefits diverse representation brings to leadership and advice, the NSW Government established the NSW Women's Advisory Council in 2023 to advise the Government on issues affecting women and girls across the State and to promote equitable policy outcomes.

The NSW Government is also establishing an LGBTIQ+ Advisory Council to be formed later in 2024. This new Advisory Council will provide ongoing advice to the NSW Government as it delivers on a range of initiatives to promote equality and inclusion for LGBTIQ+ communities. The Council will provide a mechanism for ongoing community consultation and also contribute to the development of the first NSW Government LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy.

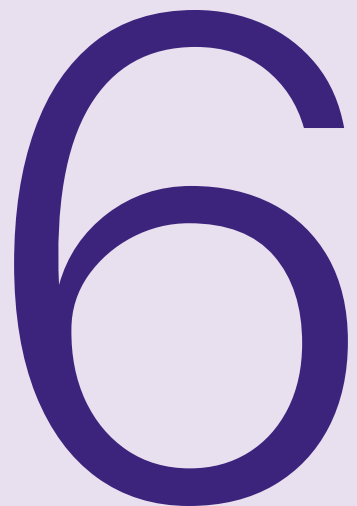
The NSW Government recognises that its workforce needs to reflect the community it serves. In recent years the public sector workforce has moved towards more equal gender representation.

There have been significant improvements in representation of women in senior executive roles within the public sector. Representation has increased from 30.6 per cent at June 2014 to 43.2 per cent at June 2023.<sup>130</sup> In addition, the number of First Nations leaders in senior executive roles has increased from 57 in 2014 to 170 in 2023.<sup>131</sup> Women make up 46 per cent of State Owned Corporations and Public Financial Corporations board members as at December 2023.<sup>132</sup>

The NSW Government is committed to greater diversity in government elections. The Office of Local Government and Women NSW are jointly committing \$160,000 to support women running for local council. This will support two women's organisations to host a series of candidate information workshops across NSW targeted at underrepresented groups of women, including First Nations women. A recent Candidate and Councillor Diversity report showed 39 per cent of councillors are women, 3.9 per cent identify as First Nations and 10.1 per cent identify as culturally and linguistically diverse.<sup>133</sup>

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# NSW Government commitment to gender responsive budgeting





## Gender responsive budgeting promotes equity, transparency and accountability within government decision making

The NSW Government is committed to gender responsive budgeting. Gender responsive budgeting helps ensure government decision making and resource allocation considers the impacts of policies and programs on everyone.

This Budget initiates implementation of gender responsive budgeting through gender impact assessments, which examine the intended or unintended gendered impacts of a proposal. This enables gender equality considerations to be embedded into policy design and ultimately resource allocation.

Gender impact assessments also apply an intersectional lens. They consider how all forms of a person's identity intersect with gender, including First Nations identity, cultural background, sexual orientation, age, disability, and location.

As part of this Budget, gender impact assessments were conducted on selected proposals across a range of policy areas, including transport, climate change, skills, domestic violence, homelessness and health. Case studies of some of these gender impact assessments have been included throughout the Statement.

Overall, the gender impact assessments found that policy decisions are not inherently gender-neutral. Policy choices may positively support gender equality outcomes or inadvertently have negative impacts or unforeseen barriers. Conducting gender impact assessments supported agencies to identify ways to mitigate any potential negative gendered impacts.

As gender impact assessments are integrated in the budget process, the NSW Government will be better equipped to make informed decisions to support gender equality.

## Supporting gender equality through the public sector

Another tool the NSW Government is applying to embed gender equality is the introduction of Gender Equality Action Plans (GEAPs) across the public sector.

NSW Government departments will develop GEAPs to actively champion gender equality when developing and improving policies, programs, services, and legislation.

GEAPs also require agencies to consider how they can support gender equality internally within their organisation. Increasing diversity and gender representation in the public sector workforce so that it is more reflective of the NSW community has the potential to deliver better government services for the people of NSW.

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# NSW Treasury

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## 2024-25 NSW Budget publications include:

Budget Paper No.01 Budget Statement  
Budget Paper No.02 Agency Financial Statements  
Budget Paper No.03 Infrastructure Statement  
Budget Paper No.04 Appropriation Bills  
Gender Equality Budget Statement  
Overview: Our plan for New South Wales  
Our plan for Regional New South Wales  
Our plan for Western Sydney  
Performance and Wellbeing – Consultation Paper

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