

## Australia

### Women in Development, A/RES/74/235

- **Promoting the transition of women from informal employment to formal employment, including access to decent work, improved wages, social protection and quality childcare (paragraph 11)**

Women continue to drive Australia's economic recovery. As of February 2022, women's workforce participation reached the highest on record at 62.4 per cent, with 1.1 million more women in work today than in 2013. The gender pay gap has narrowed to 13.8 per cent, the second-lowest on record.

The Australian Government is on track to meet the G20 commitment to reduce the labour force participation rate gap between men and women by 25 per cent by 2025. To reach the target, Australia is required to narrow the gap to below 9.1 percentage points. As at February 2022, the labour force participation gap has narrowed to a record low of 7.9 percentage points. The national government has driven these efforts through a range of initiatives.

The cost of childcare is one of the biggest barriers to women's labour force participation. The Australian Government is expected to spend a record A\$10.3 billion on child care services in the financial year 2021-22, supporting women to work, and 1.3 million children to access early childhood education and care. Approximately A\$9.9 billion has been allocated through the [Child Care Subsidy](#), a means-tested payment to childcare providers that substantially reduces out-of-pocket childcare costs, particularly for low and middle-income families.

- **Supporting women's entrepreneurship, expanding existing women-owned and – led micro, small and medium enterprises and facilitating opportunities for new women entrepreneurs (paragraph 37)**

Increasing women's entrepreneurship in Australia is important to the economy. Around 36 per cent of small business owners are women. The Australian Government's [Boosting Female Founders Initiative](#) (A\$52.2 million over five years to 2024-25) helps address several barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. Grants of between A\$25,000 and \$480,000 to majority women-owned and led start-ups to help them scale their businesses into domestic and global markets.

- **Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, sexual harassment and discrimination against women and girls, including in the world of work, and addressing the increase in gender-based violence during the COVID-19 period (paragraphs 16 and 35)**

The Australian Government is committed to a society that is free from violence against women and children, and where women are safe and respected, including in the workplace. There has been increasing awareness and understanding of family, domestic and sexual violence in recent years, but rates of violence against women and children remain unacceptably high.

The Australian Government is investing A\$1.3 billion (over six years from 2021-22) to drive change under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. A dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan is also being developed. The Australian Government is establishing a Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission to ensure national coordination and collaboration.

For too many women COVID-19 saw the onset or escalation of violence and abuse. In response, the Australian Government committed up to A\$261.4 million over two years (2021 – 2023) to assist Australian states and territories to bolster frontline support services.

### Respect@Work Report

In 2018, the Government commissioned the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces, conducted by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins. The product of this inquiry – the [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report](#) (2020) (Respect@Work Report) – found that sexual harassment is a pervasive and widespread issue in Australian workplaces. The Respect@Work Report set out 55 recommendations addressed to the Government, states and territories, employers and industry groups to prevent and address sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

On 8 April 2021, the Australian Government released '[A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#)'. The Roadmap sets out the Government's long-term commitment to driving cultural change and building safer and more respectful workplaces. The Government agreed or noted all 55 recommendations of the Respect@Work Report.

- **Providing equitable and universal access to affordable and quality health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health, for women and girls in order to achieve the realization of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, particularly in contexts of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 (paragraph 17-19)**

The Australian Government's [National Women's Health Strategy](#) 2020-2030 guides investments in the health and wellbeing of women and girls across maternal, sexual and reproductive health (including endometriosis), preventive health, and mental health.

- **Improving and systematizing the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable disaggregated data, with a focus on women's employment, informal employment, access to decent work and social protection, entrepreneurship, and unpaid care and domestic work through time-use surveys and satellite accounts to assess the contribution of such work to national income (paragraphs 49 and 50)**

The Australian [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) (WGEA) is a statutory government agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. Non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees are required to report annually against standardised gender equality indicators. WGEA provides analysis and insights to employers about their results, including benchmarking their performance against their industry. This generates an online database that helps tackle gender pay gaps, improves understanding of the policies and practices that make workplaces more equal, and supports workplaces with good records compete for talent.