**Good Initiatives, No Surprises, More Needed on PPL**

Women on Boards welcomes the $3.4b in the Federal Budget directly impacting women and the release of a specific women’s budget statement.

**Claire Braund, Executive Director of Women on Boards**, said it was good to see that the Government has listened to women and responded with a tailored package to address specific issues such as domestic violence, economic security and health.

However, she cautioned that this was simply a start and a very small proportion of the overall budget which also needed to be scrutinised for its gender-based impact.

“*Put into context, the $3.4b represents 0.14 per cent of total Commonwealth outlays over a four-year period, so we look forward to the gender-based analysis from the expert team at the National Foundation for Australian Women, which is proudly supported by WOB*.”

“*Gender-based analysis defines the ways in which public policies affect women and men differently, so we need to look beyond the headlines to see what the long-term impact for women will be in this budget*.”

Ms Braund said that at first glance there seems to be a lot of positives for women and families, although concerns remain for the welfare and security of older and single women and the Government had failed to address inequities in Paid Parental Leave, including increasing it to 26 weeks and paying superannuation on PPL entitlements.

*“PPL is currently paid at $753.90 a week for 18 weeks and is almost entirely accessed by women. Paying 9.5% superannuation on PPL adds $1,290 to a superannuation balance in a woman’s peak working years. Shifting to 26 weeks would result in $1,860 paid into superannuation per child. Not a lot, but at a real return of 5-6% pear year this adds up over a woman’s working life.”*

**Budget Positives**

* The removal of the $450 per month threshold to pay compulsory superannuation which will impact approximately 190,000 low paid women.
* The rollover of the Low & Middle Income Tax Offset which will benefit lower paid workers, two thirds of whom are women.
* Increase in childcare subsidy for families with more than two children aged five from 85% -95%.
* 1.1b for women’s safety, including emergency accommodation, legal assistance, legal assistance, cash payments for women escaping relationships, payments for Indigenous and disability women.
* Refunding and expansion of existing programs to support women return to the workforce after career breaks.
* Initiatives to support young women in STEM and other non-traditional career roles, with a focus on young Indigenous women.
* Ongoing funding for Respect@Work – response to sexual harassment in the workplace.
* Investment of $17.7b in aged care sector and its workforce – of which 87% are women.
* Expansion of the successful Women’s Leadership and Development Program by $38.3 million, which funds innovative projects to assist women into leadership roles.
* Short and targeted review of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* to ensure it is fit for purpose.

**Budget Concerns**

* Lack of support for older women (in rental accommodation) without sufficient retirement savings, who represent the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness.
* Capping at 10,000 homes over four-years for the Family Home Guarantee which provides single parents with dependent children to purchase a home with a deposit of 2 per cent – over four years.  The Government’s own estimate is that around 125,000 single parents with dependants may be eligible for the Family Home Guarantee of which around 105,000 (or 84 per cent) are female headed.
* Lack of superannuation on Paid Parental Leave which should move to the globally accepted standard of 26 weeks able to be equally accessed by both parents.

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