



The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Women

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GIVING WOMEN ACCESS TO THE OPPORTUNITIES THEY DESERVE

Women will be able to access the opportunities they deserve to train, develop and increase their economic security, all while worrying less about juggling it all at home.

It's no secret that women-dominated industries have been more severely impacted by the pandemic. Not only are women disproportionately delivering frontline essential services, including in health and education, they are also over-represented in industries most impacted during the pandemic, including retail, hospitality and the arts.

That's why we are providing \$250 million in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21* to create around 10,000 jobs, using wage subsidies to support Victorians to find steady employment.

At least \$150 million of this funding will go towards getting women back in work, of which \$50 million is targeted support for women over 45, trying to remove the additional barriers they face.

For women who want to train or retrain as we recover, we are delivering \$631 million for Free TAFE and subsidised training places, plus an additional \$155 million to provide access to those most impacted by the pandemic — with a focus on getting more women back into the workforce.

And recognising the number of women in casual work, the Government will deliver the Secure Work Pilot Scheme, helping to address the frailties of insecure work to give more women more certainty in their job.

While the global pandemic has directly impacted the employment of women — it has also shone a spotlight on the inequality and barriers too many women face every day in the workforce, trying to build the careers they want to ensure their future economic security.

Many sectors are dominated by blokes for no good reason, while too many women are forced to choose between getting it all done at home or having a fulfilling career in the workplace.

Victorian women are the brains behind many of our best and brightest business ideas, but often find it hard to break into the male-dominated world of start-ups.

This has to change, and that's why the Budget establishes a landmark \$10 million fund to back these women with the capital they need to turn their dreams into a reality.

The Australian-first innovative fund sees the Government partner with angel investors to stump up the money required to get these businesses up and running — paving the way for more jobs for women as these fledgling businesses grow.

Nobody does construction like Victoria. Our record pipeline of infrastructure means cranes in the sky, boots in the mud and food on the tables of Victorian families. But this booming industry needs to include more space for women.

The Labor Government's *Women in Construction Strategy* has already helped create careers on the tools for Victorian women — and the Budget provides \$5 million for the Women in Construction Program to deliver the actions outlined in the Strategy and implement the Building Equality Policy by creating employment opportunities for women in a male-dominated environment.

Media Contact: Crys Ja 0434 367 449 | crys.ja@minstaff.vic.gov.au

An apprenticeship is the key to a great career for many Victorians, but not enough women are getting these opportunities again. That's why the Budget includes \$5 million for leading TAFES, training and industry organisations to offer programs that get more women doing the trades they love.

Even when women do find opportunities in the workplace, too many women still find it impossible to juggle their professional pursuits with their responsibilities at home. This year, parents – but mostly mums – have had to juggle work and childcare and having the kids at home.

We want to give women with a family one less thing to worry about as they juggle it all – including the unpaid work – that's why the Budget invests \$169.6 million to make kinder free next year, saving families around \$2,000 for every child in a participating funded kindergarten program – but just as importantly, helping women return to the workforce.

Because after all, gender equality doesn't just benefit women, it makes a big difference to the entire community. Gender equality gives men and women the same opportunities at work – and that means they have the same opportunities at home.

The Government is also investing \$81.6 million to increase the availability of before and after school care – giving mums flexibility when it comes to work, study, training or re-entering the workforce.

Thanks to the Labor Government's historic Royal Commission into Family Violence and our \$2.9 billion investment, more Victorian women and children are safe from this national emergency – but one death at the hands of a domestic partner, is tragically one too many.

It's all part of an overall \$435 million direct investment in gender equality and family violence, making sure our community reaps the benefits of gender equality, and are protected in their homes.

The Budget also invests \$8.2 million to grow our family violence and sexual assault support workforce, supporting the coordination of up to 240 traineeships. It also includes \$9.7 million for women in migrant and multicultural communities to get the support they need, when they need it.

Even with every opportunity to re-enter the workforce and juggle their many responsibilities, women will never have an even footing with men unless the cultures of many organisations change – and change for good.

The Budget invests \$13 million to continue implementing our pioneering Gender Equality Act, which enshrines in law equal rights and opportunities in the workplace for people of all genders.

These investments will make a big difference to Victorian women who have fought against inequality for too long, but there's more to do, and the job won't be complete until we create gender equal workplaces for the benefit of all.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams

"The pandemic has confirmed what we knew all along – women face an uphill battle every day in the workforce. It's time it changed, because it's 2020 and women deserve every opportunity."

"Whether it's breaking down barriers, turning a business idea into a reality or just juggling everything life throws at you, we're making women the focus of our recovery."

"Putting women at the heart of our recovery from coronavirus will mean we recover stronger and faster as a community. It's the right thing to do – and the smart thing to do."