

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



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CREATING MORE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR VICTORIAN WOMEN

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing its nation-leading work in gender equality across Victoria, with new data measuring the public sector's work to remove barriers to women's success in the workforce and \$3 million to deliver targeted industry strategies to boost participation in male-dominated sectors.

Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins today welcomed the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector Gender Audit Baseline Report – the most comprehensive dataset on gender equality in the public sector to date.

The report provides a snapshot of the progress made towards gender equality in the sector and ensures that there are plans in place to create more equal workplaces – like expanded paid parental leave for both parents, as well as strategies to address gender pay gaps and improve diversity in senior leadership positions.

The Government is also releasing its response to an independent Inquiry into Economic Equity for Victorian Women, which includes \$3 million in funding to deliver strategies for the energy and manufacturing sectors to support, upskill and mentor women, while removing barriers in these historically male-dominated workforces.

The Inquiry found what too many Victorian women already know. Women are paid less, take on more unpaid caring responsibilities, are limited by harmful gender norms and stereotypes, and face higher rates of gendered violence – barriers that make too many women less able to fulfil their potential as leaders in the workforce.

The Government accepts 28 of 31 recommendations, with the remaining three under consideration.

The recommendations include ways to re-balance the load of unpaid work and care through parental leave policies, partnering with the private sector to increase representation of women in non-traditional sectors and developing plans to revalue the work of the care and community sector.

The Government has already implemented many of the recommendations, like the nation-leading *Best Start, Best Life* initiative – a \$9 billion plan to reform early childhood education which will get up to 13,300 extra women back into the workforce over the next decade while boosting the state's economy by up to \$4.8 billion each year by 2032.

The Labor Government's record on gender equality leads the nation, with equal gender representation in the Cabinet for the first time in Victoria's history, a 50 per cent female leadership group, and a pledge to ensure 50 per cent of all government boards must be women.

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020, it's now a requirement for public sector organisations, including Local Government, to demonstrate material progress towards gender equality and report their progress every two years.

Public sector organisations are also required to publish Gender Equality Action Plans every four years outlining how they are making their workplaces safer and fairer – a nation-leading step.

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"To achieve greater gender equality in Victoria, we must all work together to identify and dismantle these structures – it's challenging work but it's critical."

Quote attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas

"We must support women in the workforce and failing to do so is not only unfair, it weakens our economy. Research shows equitable workplaces are more productive, have less staff turnover and enjoy higher morale."

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