

Australian women call for change

The speed and strength of Australia's recovery from a once-in-a-century pandemic will depend on the extent to which women can fully participate in the rebuild.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted women, exacerbated existing challenges and created a wider gulf of disadvantage, particularly for First Nations women, women with disability, LGBTIQ+ and culturally and linguistically diverse women.

Change is achingly overdue. Australia's frontline care workers, facing the greatest risk, are disproportionately women. Unpaid domestic responsibilities have overwhelmingly fallen to women. The most significant job losses and reduction in hours and entitlements have occurred in sectors which employ women. The surge in mental health issues, family and domestic violence has hurt women the most. And all the while, it is children that are impacted – due to the challenges faced by women.

Change is in everyone's interest. Change will not only benefit women, children and families, but will also boost our economy and reduce costs related to a multitude of social harms. The benefits will be shared by all Australians.

Change is beyond necessary. We the undersigned come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. With many voices but one message, we aim to highlight women and girls as a critical policy issue for government. Why? Our nation will be healthier, safer, stronger and more prosperous with a government that acts on this urgent call for change.

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Hon. Kate Ellis

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Lucy Turnbull AO

Natalie Walker

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The change we seek

Early Years

A national commitment for an evidence – based early learning system that is universally accessible and high quality, delivered by securely employed and properly paid educators and coordinated from infancy through to primary school.

Government funded paid parental leave at the minimum wage for 26 weeks, shared between partners. Phased up to 52 weeks by 2030.

Women's Safety

Change the National Employment Standards to include a minimum 10 days per year of paid family and domestic violence leave.

Invest in preventative and crisis housing for older women and people experiencing family and domestic violence (including those on temporary visas).

Implement in full all 55 recommendations from the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner's Respect@Work report.

Financial Equality

Change the Fair Work Act to include gender equality as an express object, remove the need for a 'male comparator' and establish a new Fair Work Commission gender equality panel.

Change income supports which disproportionately impact women, single parents and children based on the principle of 'do no further harm' to lift women and children out of poverty.

Women in Leadership

Change the Workplace Gender Equality Act to require public reporting by all organisations with more than 20 employees on all indicators including gender pay gap, cultural background and progress towards women in leadership targets.

Commit to targets and public reporting on women in leadership in the political and public service sector.

Support and fund all seven recommendations of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Report.