

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER:

Ensure the upcoming Budget makes the **lives of Australian women easier.**

Dear Prime Minister,

As you know, this week marked International Women's Day. In line with the theme of IWD21, "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world", we are calling for you, Prime Minister, to address Australia's gender crisis. We know that while inequality persists, true development and economic growth can never flourish.

While we have made some strides on gender equality over recent decades, we are still falling short for women in almost every workplace, including the Federal Parliament.

Australia's post-pandemic economic recovery depends on finding ways to support and unlock economic growth and jobs. One way to do this is to unlock the productivity gains that come from increasing women's workforce participation.

KPMG estimates even halving the gap between male and female workforce participation would increase our annual GDP by A\$60 billion over the next two decades.

A major barrier stopping women going to work is the cost and quality of childcare. We see the results in the labour force statistics as women make up just 37.7% of all full-time employees and 68.2% of all part-time employees. More flexible workplaces, with universally accessible high-quality childcare, will deliver more choice.

It is time to recognise that investing in an accessible childcare and early learning system, with valued and well-supported educators, will return a triple dividend: it will improve early learning outcomes for Australian children, increase workforce participation for women, and have long-term productivity gains by contributing to a more skilled workforce.

We, the undersigned, are calling on you, Prime Minister, to ensure the upcoming Federal Budget makes the lives of Australian women easier, not harder.

In previous years, the Budget was accompanied by a women's impact statement, providing visibility of how key decisions and reforms would impact women's lives, both professionally and personally. Why was that important statement removed?

We ask that this statement, and the greater transparency it gives on the gendered impacts of the Budget, be immediately returned.

The next Federal Budget should deliver key reforms that support better equality for women, including a commitment to place early learning reform on the agenda of the National Cabinet.

The time is now. We urge you to move towards a better, more equal future.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Forrest AO, Co-Chair, Minderoo Foundation

Lucy Turnbull AO

Diane Smith-Gander AO

Elizabeth Gaines, CEO, Fortescue Metals Group

Rosie Batty AO

Michele O'Neil, President, ACTU

Prof. Sandra Eades

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Hon. Jenny Macklin

Dr Sue Packer AM

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Stephanie Alexander AO

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Prof. Marcia Langton AO

Dr Jen Jackson

Prof. Sharon Goldfeld

Ronni Kahn AO, CEO & Founder, OzHarvest

Mary Patetsos, Chairperson, FECCA

Dr Jayne Meyer Tucker, Founder, JMTinc

Debby Blakey, CEO, HESTA

Georgie Dent, Executive Director, The Parenthood

Danielle Wood, CEO, Grattan Institute

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Naomi Milgrom AC



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