

FAIR AGENDA

Gender equity group celebrates progress; but say women left with major gaps on safety needs, women's safety not a winner this budget

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Gender equity and women's safety advocates Fair Agenda welcomed the Albanese Government's first budget as progress towards a more gender equal future, but called out major gaps for women's safety that still need to be addressed.

"Women's safety won't be the winner of any budget until the government delivers the minimum of \$1 billion a year that experts say is needed to start addressing gendered violence. This budget gets us just over halfway to that figure over the coming years."

"This budget still leaves so many women in danger without the service support they need. We need major new investment over the term of the Albanese Government, starting from the next budget in May." said Renee Carr, Executive Director at Fair Agenda.

"It's positive to see funding for respectful relationships; safer workplaces; and the community services so many women rely on for their safety. But after a decade of neglect by previous governments there's much more investment needed across services.

Right now men using violence are on months-long waiting lists for behaviour change interventions; women trying to escape domestic violence aren't able to get the safety support they need; and rape survivors are being told to wait months for trauma counselling support."

The group pointed to the [Labor government's commitment to ending gender-based violence in one generation](#) - made alongside the launch of the new *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children* last week. The Government has pointed to [\\$1.7 billion of funding for women's safety in this budget](#) - but this is spread over multiple years. Experts have called for \$1 billion annually.

"Chalmers touted this budget as a *"bread and butter"* budget - one focused on the essentials that's not *"flashy"* or *"fancy"*. But women's safety funding *is* a bread and butter issue. A woman's ability to access the services she needs to be safe after domestic

violence or rape, is not “*flashy*”, it’s critical and life-saving and needs proper funding.” said Fair Agenda’s Executive Director, Renee Carr.

“For too many women - men’s use of violence traps and isolates them from friends, family and work, and has lifelong consequences to not only their financial freedom, but also to their health, wellbeing, relationships and participation in their communities.”

The group pointed to PM Albanese’s statement that described women as being “at the centre” of this budget, and his statement that: “The full and equal and respectful participation of women in our economy is our nation’s greatest untapped resource.”

“Freedom to return to the workforce, and to make a living whilst balancing caring responsibilities, are all important parts in creating a gender equal future - what this budget misses is the level of investment needed for freedom for women to be free from violence.” she added.

“We’re calling on the government to see this funding for what it is - life-saving, urgent and essential - and to deliver the major funding boost that’s needed at the May 2023 budget.”

The group also welcomed the Albanese Government’s commitments to increase Paid Parental Leave to 26 weeks, and to create greater subsidies for childcare.

Media contact: Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda, 0435 597 976

Further information

Fair Agenda has highlighted a range of areas in need of immediate investment that weren’t properly resourced in tonight’s budget, including:

- To increase intervention with men using violence and address waiting list times for men’s behaviour change programs
- Intervening earlier with those using and affected by violence, to ensure more people are able to identify harmful behaviours and interrupt abuse earlier; and to ensure children affected by domestic and family violence are provided with trauma recovery
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community controlled organisations leading critical work to prevent violence and support safety outcomes for First Nations women affected by men’s violence
- Trauma-response for rape survivors - so they can access counselling support, and address the unacceptable wait lists faced by women calling 1800 RESPECT for support,
- Investment in specialist case management services - so women trying to build safer futures can access the specialist support they need to be safe
- Scaling of successful pilot initiatives across settings like courts and hospitals.