

2020-2021

Federal Budget

*Budget measures to address
violence against women and
their children*

22nd October 2020

AWAVA

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

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Budget overview

The bushfires and Covid-19 had brought on a number of social challenges for the people living in Australia. The stresses and the home confinement due to mandatory lockdown and economic insecurity have led to a spike in violence against women along with demand for frontline services serving victims/survivors of violence¹. At the start of the year, the Government provided the initial \$150 million to meet the rising demands on the frontline services. As part of the 2020 Budget, the Government has announced the continuation of the Social and Community Sector Supplementation payments from July 2021. It has also announced a continued commitment to fund the 1800RESPECT Helpline. However, the Government has not added more funding in the forward estimates to address the ‘shadow pandemic’ of family and domestic violence.

The economic challenges of 2020 have revealed so starkly how gender and other social inequities remain embedded in Australian society. More women have lost their jobs than men since the start of the year and many have opted to leave the workforce altogether². Female-dominated sectors including health, social services and age care have experienced unprecedented demands while being chronically under resourced³.

Economic insecurity puts women at higher risk of violence as they have limited options for leaving an abusive relationship, and are more exposed to unsafe households and unsafe working conditions⁴. Yet neither gender analysis nor violence is in focus. For example, while the Budget aims at jobs creation and boosting infrastructure investments, nothing has been allocated to boost social housing. Although the majority of the job losses and those relying on JobSeeker are women, the budget has targeted big businesses and male-dominated industry for stimulus and support. Tax cuts will also be provided to the employed, and favours those in higher income brackets – the majority of whom are men. These policies could in turn increase the gender pay gap and income inequality between women and men, which is a known risk factor for violence against women⁵.

The Second Women’s Economic Security Package was announced on Budget night with \$231 million to focus on women in STEM, start-up and leadership mentor programs. Economic security has been shown to be a critical factor for women escaping violence. Unlike the previous Women’s Economic Security Package released in 2018, the Second Women’s Economic Security Package has limited investment in women’s safety. While AWAVA welcomes the Respect@Work Council to assist in addressing sexual harassment in Australian workplaces, making the workplace safer for women, the Second Women’s Economic Security Package does not provide a systematic plan for building women’s safety and economic security for those women most marginalised.

Unfortunately a number of vital programs had their funding discontinued, not extended or not allocated at all. Among many, this includes funding for the [Safe Connections Program](#) by WESNET and income support for women on temporary visas experiencing violence.

¹ Boxall H., Morgan A. & Brown R. (2020) The prevalence of domestic violence among women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistical Bulletin no. 28. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Available at: <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/sb/sb28>

² ABS (September, 2020). Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia. Available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia/latest-release>

³ For more information see: https://www.womenssafety.nsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/UDPATE_COVID19-Impact-on-DFV-in-NSW_2.04.20_WSNSW.pdf and https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/Responding_to_the_shadow_pandemic_practitioner_views_on_the_nature_of_and_responses_to_violence_against_women_in_Victoria_Australia_during_the_COVID-19_restrictions/12433517

⁴ ANROWS (2016). Domestic violence and women’s economic security: Building Australia’s capacity for prevention and redress: Final report. Available at: <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/domestic-violence-and-womens-economic-security-building-australias-capacity-for-prevention-and-redress-final-report/>

⁵ Cortis, N & Bullen, J (2016), ‘Domestic violence and women’s economic security: Building Australia’s capacity for prevention and redress: Final report’, ANROWS, Sydney. Available at <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/domestic-violence-and-womens-economic-security-building-australias-capacity-for-prevention-and-redress-key-findings-and-future-directions/>

2020-21 Budget Measures at a glance

NEW

Second Women's Economic Security Package

Respect@Work Council to assist in addressing sexual harassment in Australian workplaces (part of WESP)

National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25

Continuation of the Social and Community Sector Supplementation payments

Family Court and Federal Circuit Court Matters

GAPS

Adequate funding to meet the rising demand for **specialist women's services**

No new funding for **family violence** in response to Covid-19

No funding in forward estimates for the **Second National Plan**

Income support for **women on temporary visas** experiencing violence

Adequate funding to meet the rising demand for specialist **homelessness** services including increasing social housing stock

No clear commitment to the ongoing funding **National Women's Alliances**

No funding for the implementation of the **ALRC family law review**

ONGOING

National Plan Partners funding

Funding for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

Funding for the eSafety Commissioner (not gendered)

CONCERNS

Lack of gender analysis of the budget

English testing for partner visas

Continuation of ParentsNext

Continuation of Cashless debit cards

No commitment to permanent increase of JobSeeker

Measures across portfolios

Funding to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and their children

Status: partially funded

In the 2020-21 Budget, there is no cross portfolio budget measures for prevention and responses to violence against women. In March 2020, the Council of Australian Governments announced a commitment to developing a new National Plan to commence when the current plan finishes in 2022. However, there is no budget earmarked for the Second National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2022 in the forward estimates. No additional funding was added to the current funding for the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22.

The year 2020 has seen an increase in demands for women's specialists and family violence services. At the start of the year, the Government had provided what was described as an 'initial' \$150 million package to respond to an increase in demand for domestic violence services during COVID-19. Of that, \$130 million has been provided to state and territory governments. The remaining \$20 million has been directed to boost capacity for national programs like 1800RESPECT, MensLine Australia and the Men's Referral Service. No further announcement was made in the 2020-2021 Budget.

In the Women's Economic Security Statement (WESS), the Government states to have "contributed more than \$1 billion to women's safety", including \$340 million towards the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22 and \$150 million for the COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Support Package. It is unclear what the remaining \$510 million from that statement accounts for, and whether this amount includes any other funding announced during the implementation of the National Plan.

Given that the ongoing issue of Covid-19 will most likely continue well into 2021, if not beyond, AWAVA recommends that more funding is committed to supporting the women's specialist and family violence services, as well as increasing funding for wrap-around services for victims/survivors of violence including for crisis and affordable housing. AWAVA has joined with sixteen other organisations in "calling for structural change to [the] budget as women are left behind" in a media statement which can be found [here](#).

Second Women's Economic Security Package

Status: new and ongoing funding

The Second Women's Economic Security Package combined both measures announced in 2018 that are still continuing and some new measures. Announced alongside the budget was the Second Women's Economic Security Package (WESP) with \$231 million which has an aim of 'getting women into work'. The full package can be viewed [here](#).

The package includes:

- \$90.3 million over three years from 2020-21 for concessional work test arrangements for Paid Parental Leave in response to COVID-19. Specifically, relaxing the Paid Parental Leave work test for births and adoptions that occur between 22 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 to allow parents to qualify for the payment if they have worked in 10 of the last 20 months, instead of 10 of the last 13 months, preceding the birth or adoption of a child.
- \$47.9 million over four years from 2020-21 to increase grants for the Women's Leadership and Development Program, including funding for the Academy of Enterprising Girls and Women

Building Australia. This measure also aims to support women experiencing family and domestic violence to take up job opportunities.

- \$35.9 million over five years from 2020-21 (including \$6.5 million in 2024-25) to increase the number of co-funded grants to women-founded start-ups under the Boosting Female Founders Initiative and to provide access to expert mentoring and advice for women entrepreneurs.
- \$25.1 million over five years from 2020-21 (including \$3.0 million in 2024-25) to establish a Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Industry Cadetship program to support 500 women working in STEM industries to complete an Advanced Diploma through a combination of study and work-integrated learning experiences.
- \$24.7 million over four years from 2020-21 to streamline the servicing arrangement of ParentsNext and modify the eligibility to provide assistance to parents most in need.
- \$14.5 million over four years from 2020-21 to extend or expand existing initiatives that support girls and women to gain STEM skills and capabilities, including the Women in STEM Ambassador, the Women in STEM Entrepreneurship Grants Program and the Girls in STEM Toolkit
- \$2.1 million over three years from 2020-21 to establish a Respect@Work Council to assist in addressing sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

AWAVA in particular welcomed new funding to establish the Respect@Work Council which will have a direct benefit in addressing sexual harassments in the workplaces. We await further details about the Council and whether it is tasked with the implementation of all recommendations from the Respect@Work report.

The continued funding of ParentsNext may have unintended negative consequences for women as this program has been shown to have had issues. AWAVA had previously provided input, which can be found [here](#).

Economic security has been shown to be a critical factor for women escaping violence. WESP is not targeted towards building long-term economic security for women who are most marginalised, those most impacted by Covid-19 and are living on or below the poverty line. These are the women who have least options for leaving an abusive relationship. WESP does not have a systematic way to tackle entrenched gender inequity that lead to the economic disparity between women and men, such as the gender pay gap, superannuation, housing, childcare, precarious nature of female dominated workforce and pension. A women's budget along with a gender and equity lens of the budget would serve to close the economic inequity and ensure that those who are most left behind receive the support they need.

JobMaker Scheme

Status: funded but concerning

Economic security is a protective factor against violence against women as it offers women more options to live in safe environments, and without being reliant on potentially abusive partner.

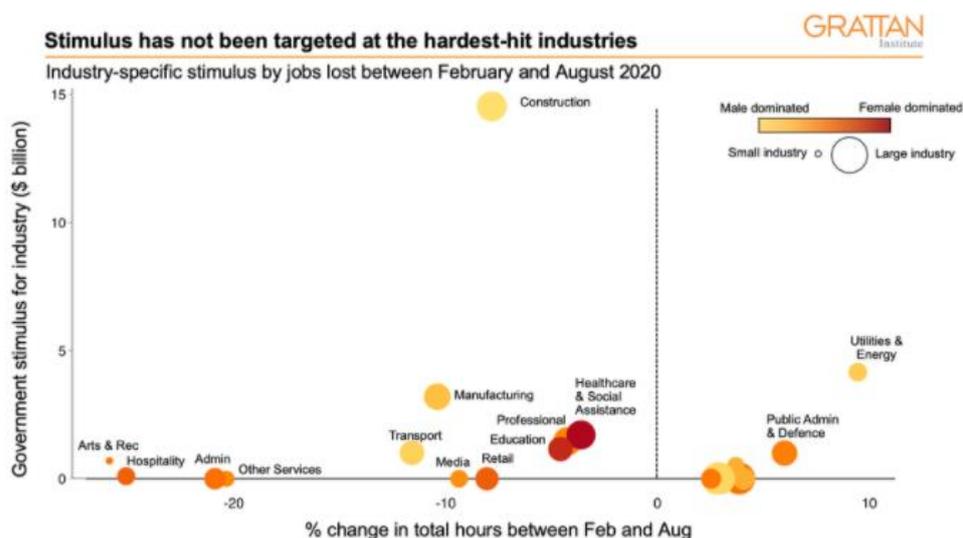
Relevant announcements include:

- new \$4 billion JobMaker Hiring Credit to provide businesses with an incentive to take on additional employees aged between 16 and 35 years old. Around 450,000 positions for young Australians will be supported through the JobMaker Hiring Credit.
- \$1.2 billion through the Boosting Apprenticeships Wage Subsidy to support up to 100,000 new apprentices and trainees. Eligible employers who can demonstrate that the new employee will increase overall employee headcount and payroll will receive \$200 per week if they hire an

eligible employee aged 16 to 29 years or \$100 per week if they hire an eligible employee aged 30 to 35 years.

An analysis by the Grattan Institute (see the chart below) shows that male-dominated industry will be receiving the majority of the subsidy even though the female-dominated industry had been the hardest hits with job losses, and many are on the frontline to the pandemic. The assumption is that the big businesses will be the key driver of the economy and it will be up to them to use the scheme to offer more jobs to young people. These tend to be precarious low paid jobs which do not offer job security. At the same time, apprenticeships models are mostly offered in male-dominated sector. An age cap of 35 years will further exclude the older women demographic who are shown to be the largest and growing demographic among the unemployed and at risk of homelessness, and are relying on JobSeeker scheme.

While job boosting scheme is always welcomed in a recession, the JobMaker scheme has not been designed with a gender and equity lens in mind. Evidence has also shown that investing in social infrastructure and the care economy would boost job numbers as an average female-dominated workforce has lower pay than male-dominated workforce. By exacerbating the income inequity between men and women, the JobMaker scheme could unintentionally contribute to coercive control and abuse in families, and leave more women on or below the poverty line.



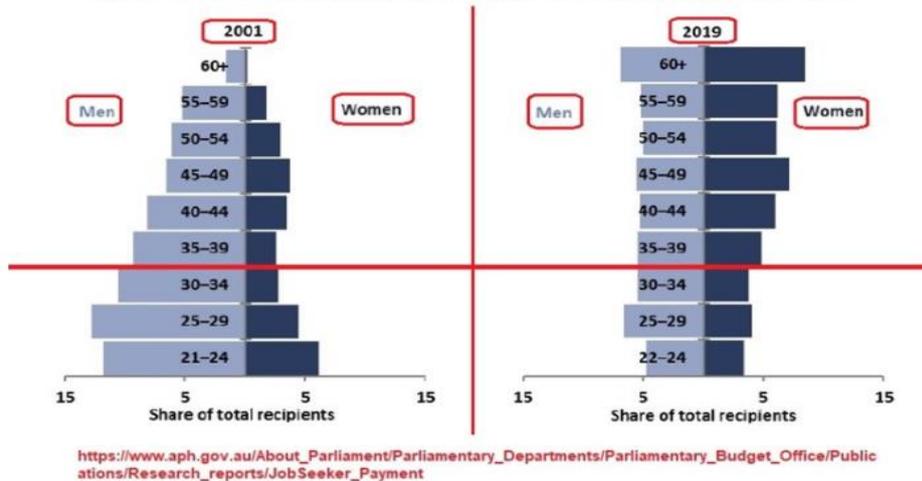
Excludes expenses for 'other economic affairs' (which contains JobKeeper) and 'other purposes' (largely GST payments to the states). Total expenses growth is also calculated excluding 'other purposes'. (Grattan Institute)

Temporary Increase to the JobSeeker Payments

Status: Funded but failed to be permanently increased

Since 27 April 2020, the Government has established a new time-limited Coronavirus Supplement to be paid at a non-income tested rate of \$550 per fortnight. From 25 September 2020 this supplement changed to \$250 per fortnight and will continue to 31 December 2020. The income free area changed to \$300 per fortnight with a 60 cents taper for income earned above the income free area for JobSeeker Payment. Since JobSeeker payment has not been adjusted to the CPI since the 90's and with the growing number of people, especially older women, becoming more reliant on it, AWAVA recommends for the increase to the JobSeeker payment be made permanent.

Figure 2-3: Share of JobSeeker recipients by gender and age group, 2001 and 2019



More unemployed men than women will be eligible for the Government's JobMaker scheme. (Parliamentary Budget Office)

Despite the temporary increase to social security payments, two key groups remained excluded. The Budget did not provide any funding to support women on temporary visas experiencing violence. There is also very little in the budget to provide women with disability with a safety net. Two top up supplements of \$250 were announced for people living on the government pensions, including the Disability Support Pension (DSP) Carers Payment and Aged Pension. While these two \$250 payments are welcome, they ignore ongoing calls from the disability sector to raise the base rate of the DSP and other pensions. For more analysis on the Budget impact on women with disability read [here](#).

Tax cuts

Status: It could further exacerbate gender and income inequality

The Government is lowering taxes by over \$50 billion over the forward estimates, including by \$9 billion in 2020-21 and \$32 billion in 2021-22. This is estimated to create around 100,000 jobs by the end of 2021-22. The Government will lower personal income taxes for 11.6 million individuals compared with 2017-18 tax settings to put more money back into their pockets.

However, an analysis from ACOSS⁶ has found the tax cut will favour men and those in the higher income brackets. This measure may end up exacerbating wealth inequity whereby women will be further disadvantaged.

Attorney General's Department

Family Law and Federal Circuit Court Matters

Status: new funding

Additional funding has been allocated for family law matters. According to the Budget Paper 2 and the AGD Budget Statement, the Government will provide \$132.1 million over four years from 2020-21 to expedite the handling of family law matters and other matters in the Federal Circuit Court (combined sum). This includes:

⁶ See more at <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.acoss.org.au/acoss-post-budget-analysis-graphs/&sa=D&source=hangouts&ust=1602819888647000&usg=AFQjCNEkDAqYCEjBHdidzODgSe9sKAjWw>

- \$87.3 million over three years from 2021-22 to maintain funding for family law services funded under the Family Relationship Services Program.
- \$35.7 million over four years from 2020-21 in additional resources and judges for the Federal Circuit Court (FCC) to assist with the timely resolution of migration and family law matters
- \$4.8 million in 2020-21 for the Family Violence and Cross Examination of Parties Scheme, which helps protect victims of family violence in family law proceedings
- \$1.8 million over four years from 2020-21 to implement Federal Family Violence Orders under the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme
- \$2.5 million in 2020-21 for a new case management system for the Family Court of Western Australia. This measure will be partially offset by an increase in FCC filing fees for migration litigants.
- \$2.5 million is being provided over two years to support specialised 'COVID-19 Lists', which have been developed by the family law courts to manage the acute workload pressures arising from the pandemic. The COVID-19 Lists are Registrar-led and characterised by quick and effective response times, with applications assessed and listed within 72 business hours.
- The Government will provide \$7.7 million over four years from 2020-21 (including \$7.2 million in capital funding over two years from 2020-21) for works to improve the safety and security of the Rockhampton and Launceston Federal Circuit Court buildings.

The Federal Family Violence Orders (FFVOs) were introduced to “provide women with additional protections from family violence and safeguard the wellbeing of children. Readily accessible and criminally enforceable orders for family violence will enhance women’s ability to fully engage in the workforce without fearing for their own or their children’s safety. Criminally enforceable FFVOs will also limit the need for vulnerable families to interact with multiple courts to address their legal needs in the COVID-19 context and beyond – which is more economically viable for women than navigating multiple courts.” AWAVA welcomes this measure.

The 2020-21 Budget includes \$12.8 million over the forward estimates in additional resourcing for family law matters. The funding will support the appointment of an additional family law judge as well as registrars. This will assist to reduce the length of time that families spend within the family law system and ensure that vulnerable litigants, including those affected by family violence, are able to resolve their disputes in a timely manner.

Continued funding for the Family Violence and Cross-Examination of Parties Scheme Women escaping family violence may settle family law disputes for less than they are entitled to in order to avoid being directly cross-examined by their ex-partner in court. This is why the Government introduced a ban on direct cross-examination in specific and serious circumstances to protect victims from re-traumatisation. This includes where there are convictions, charges or final family violence orders in place between the parties. The Government has provided additional funding to the Family Violence and Cross-Examination of Parties Scheme which ensures Legal Aid Commissions can provide legal representation in cases when the ban on direct cross-examination applies. The scheme aims to provide access to legal representation for victims/survivors of family violence to pursue fairer, faster and safer outcomes in family law matters, without fear of experiencing further trauma by being directly cross-examined by their perpetrators.

Some pilots have not received additional funding in this funding or an indication of their continuation. They are:

- A pilot in the Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Parramatta registries to resolve property cases with an asset pool of less than \$500,000 in a simplified way ('PPP500' Family Law Priority Property Pools under \$500,000). The aim of the PPP500 pilot is to improve the responsiveness of the family courts for vulnerable parties to provide a simplified way of resolving property

disputes which will minimise risk and legal costs, and best preserve the parties' assets. This was the 2019-20 Budget measure.

- In 2019-20, funding was provided over three financial years for a risk screening, triage and high risk specialist list pilot which will initially be operating in the Adelaide, Brisbane and Parramatta registries of the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court. The Lighthouse Project involves: early risk screening through a secure online platform; early identification and management of safety concerns; assessment and triage of cases by a specialised team; and referring high-risk cases to a dedicated court list, known as the Evatt List.

National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25

Status: ongoing

The Attorney-General's Department continues to administer the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25 (NLAP) in partnership with Treasury the National Indigenous Australians Agency. The NLAP supports frontline legal assistance services delivered by Legal Aid Commissions, Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and specialist Domestic Violence Units/Health Justice Partnerships.

According to the Treasury Budget Statement (page 29), components of the NLAP are budgeted until 2024. The NLAP is connected to the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, which funds activities to support state and territory efforts to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. According to the Regional Budget Statement, the Australian Government has committed over \$2 billion over five years from 1 July 2020 for legal assistance services to provide legal help to vulnerable people facing disadvantage. The NLAP provides long term, quarantined and guaranteed funding to Legal Aid Commission (LACs), Community Legal Centres (CLCs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS), and specialist Domestic Violence Units (DVUs) and Health Justice Partnerships (HJPs).

The \$2 billion in funding includes:

- \$1.2 billion in funding for LACs
- \$284 million for CLCs
- \$441 million for ATSILS
- \$51 million for DVUs and HJPs
- \$20 million for Family Advocacy and Support Services
- \$20 million for state and territory governments to administer the NLAP.

Under the NLAP, the Australian Government has committed more than \$248 million in additional funding, including: the permanent restoration of \$150.6 million in legal assistance funding that would have been subject to reductions based on decisions of consecutive governments; an increase in baseline funding for legal assistance services of \$51.6 million; and additional funding of \$25.8 million for frontline legal assistance services for family law and/or family violence⁷. This funding will allow LACs, CLCs and ATSILS to provide essential services across Australia, including regional communities.

Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS) Program

Status: unclear

⁷ Note that not all funding will go to the specialist women's services.

The Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) program which was previously funded under the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children to provide a holistic service (a duty lawyer and a social worker) for people affected by family violence to navigate the family law system. The Australian Government provided \$18.5 million from 2016 to 2019 and an additional \$22.6 million to extend the existing FASS from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022 in the 2019-20 Budget.

However, there are no forward estimates for FASS beyond 2022 (The Treasury Budget Statement, page 29). It is possible that there is still continued funding for FASS until then so it has not received any further extension of funding at this stage. AWAVA recommends that these useful and much needed services continue to receive funding beyond 2022.

In addition, no announcements have been made to expand FASS as recommended by the independent evaluation. There is an increased need for the FASS expansion alongside the new urgent list in the Family Court and the Lighthouse Pilot.

Legally Assisted and Culturally Appropriate Dispute Resolution Pilots

Status: Unfunded

This measure builds on the previous funding under the Third Action Plan in the amount of \$6.2 million to fund Family Relationship Centres to pilot enhanced models of legally assisted and culturally-appropriate family dispute resolution services for Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse families who have experienced family violence. In 2018-2019 further \$2.475 million were provided to extend the operation and evaluation of the pilot until 30 June 2020. Unfortunately, there appears to be no further funding for this program beyond 2020.

Single National Mechanism for Commonwealth Legal Assistance

Status: unclear

Funding for the Single National Mechanism for Commonwealth Legal Assistance was announced in the 2019-20 Budget for the amount of \$1.2 billion over three years from 2020-21. It commenced on 1 July 2020 and will allow for a more collaborative, innovative and effective legal assistance sector in order to address legal needs for the most vulnerable Australians. There is no mention of it in the 2023-24 estimates at this stage.

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disabilities

Status: continued

The funding for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disabilities is allocated until 2022. The interim report is projected to be submitted in October 2020 and the final report to be submitted by 29th of April 2022.

While funding has been allocated for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disabilities until 2022, there is lack of clarity around funding for the resourcing of the commission's forthcoming recommendations.

Department of Social Services

Support for Frontline Social Services

Status: **continued**

AWAVA welcomes the Government's decision to provide \$132.6 million over four years from 2020-21 to deliver ongoing funding for frontline social services (*Department of Social Services Budget Statements, page 36*). These services support vulnerable Australians, including children and families in areas of entrenched socio-economic disadvantage and people with disability. Transitional arrangements are in place for the cessation of the Social and Community Sector Supplementation payments. All DSS grants for frontline social services impacted by the cessation of the Social and Community Services Pay Equity Special Account will have their funding rebased from 1 July 2021 to ensure wage costs continue to be met.

Funding for the National Plan Partners

Status: **additional and continued**

While the amount of funding has not been announced, the Government has stated that it will continue to fund the national counselling helpline 1800RESPECT to support Australians impacted by, or at risk of, domestic and family violence. The Department of Social Services will conduct a competitive procurement process to secure a provider to deliver 1800RESPECT into the future, commencing in late 2020.

No new funding has been announced for Our Watch, DV Alert and ANROWS.

COVID-19 Response Package – additional funding for domestic and family violence support

Status: **unclear**

Table 1.2: Department of Social Services 2020-21 Budget measures
Measures announced after the Economic and Fiscal Update July 2020

	Program	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
COVID-19 Response Package – additional funding for domestic and family violence support (d)	2.1				
Administered payment		nfp	nfp	nfp	nfp
Departmental payment		–	–	–	–
Total		nfp	nfp	nfp	nfp
Cashless Debit Card – ongoing funding (e)	2.1, 2.4				
Administered payment		nfp	nfp	nfp	nfp
Departmental payment		nfp	nfp	nfp	nfp
Total		nfp	nfp	nfp	nfp

Department of Social Services Budget Statements, page 34

(d) The financial implications for the measure COVID-19 Response Package – additional funding for domestic and family violence support are not for publication due to commercial-in-confidence sensitivities.

(e) The financial implications for the measure Cashless Debit Card – ongoing funding are not for publication due to commercial-in-confidence sensitivities.

With regard to the additional COVID funding for family and domestic violence services appear under undisclosed administered amount that has been set aside until 2024. It is unclear whether it is suggesting that the amount could be used for tracking the initial \$150 million which was released earlier in 2020; or there will be additional funding announced.

Cashless Debit Card

Status: continued and unwelcomed

Department of Social Services, Service Australia and Attorney-General's Department Budget Statements have undisclosed amount for the continuation of the existing Cashless Debit Card sites of the Ceduna region, South Australia; the East Kimberley and the Goldfields regions, Western Australia; and the Bundaberg and Hervey Bay region, Queensland and for the Northern Territory, and the Cape York region in Queensland. Additional funding will be allocated to support the transition of Income Management participants to the Cashless Debit Card in the Northern Territory, and the Cape York region in Queensland, across two years to 2022. The program has drawn much criticism for being used as a form of social control of the Indigenous communities and may be causing unintended harm.

AWAVA strongly opposes the Cashless Debit Card program and calls on the government to completely abandon the program. There is no evidence to suggest any positive outcomes from the compulsory punitive welfare policies. The Auditor General concluded that in the absence of effective evaluation and monitoring mechanism, it is difficult to conclude whether any positive impacts or reduction of social harm has occurred. We call on the government to ensure that every member of the community is treated equally and with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Housing and homelessness

Status: concerns, partially unfunded

Table 2.4.1: Budgeted expenses for Outcome 4

	2019-20 Estimated actual \$'000	2020-21 Budget \$'000	2021-22 Forward estimate \$'000	2022-23 Forward estimate \$'000	2023-24 Forward estimate \$'000
Outcome 4: Housing					
Program 4.1 - Housing and Homelessness					
Administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)	6,277	56,792	30,198	15	84
Administered total	6,277	56,792	30,198	15	84
Total expenses for Program 4.1	6,277	56,792	30,198	15	84
Program 4.2 - Affordable Housing					
Administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)	114,864	113,533	101,738	82,683	60,347
Administered total	114,864	113,533	101,738	82,683	60,347
Total expenses for Program 4.2	114,864	113,533	101,738	82,683	60,347
Movement of administered funds between years (c)	2019-20 Estimated actual \$'000	2020-21 Budget \$'000	2021-22 Forward estimate \$'000	2022-23 Forward estimate \$'000	2023-24 Forward estimate \$'000
Outcome 4:					

Program 4.1 - Housing and Homelessness	(7,509)	7,509	-	-	-
Total movement of administered funds	(7,509)	7,509	-	-	-

DSS Budget Statement, page 96

Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness. The demand for affordable housing is further exacerbated by Covid-19 lockdown and higher unemployment. However, the 2020-21 Budget on infrastructures will be directed towards major roads construction and home renovation subsidy.

There were no budget allocations for increase in social housing stock. In addition, budget measures included a cut of \$41.3 million from homelessness funding in July 2021. **We regret to see a \$41.3 million cut to homelessness services from July 2021.**⁸

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

(Payments (\$m))	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
National Disability Insurance Scheme Launch Transition Agency	255.4	191.6	142.1	-
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	28.6	23.2	20.1	21.1
Total – payments	284.0	214.8	162.1	21.1
Related receipts (\$m)	-35.2	-40.1	-41.4	-
National Disability Insurance Scheme Launch Transition Agency				

Budget paper 2, p. 156

The Budget allocated \$798.8 million over four years from 2020-21 for NDIS. It is essential that the extra funding for the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is used to support the Commission to take a more proactive role in ensuring quality and safeguarding for NDIS participants. In the recent inquiry into the Commission following the death of Adelaide woman with disability Ann Marie Smith, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission was found to have fined and banned just one disability provider, despite receiving over 8000 complaints.⁹

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Status: ongoing

The funding is ongoing and no new budget measures have been announced.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies conducts a number of research projects into family and domestic violence, including Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, Evaluation of the Small Claims Property Pilot, Evaluation of the Lawyer-assisted Property Mediation: Legal Aid Commission Trial, and the Relationship between Gambling and Domestic Violence against Women study. The Institute receives short term funding each Budget which can make it difficult for them to conduct longitudinal research necessary for understanding family and domestic violence.

⁸ More details at <https://chp.org.au/media-releases/federal-budget-reveals-millions-to-be-cut-from-vital-homelessness-services-homelessness-australia/>

⁹ Harris, R (2020) 'Disability care watchdog has issued just one fine despite 8000 complaints.' *Sydney Morning Herald*. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/disability-care-watchdog-has-issued-just-one-fine-despite-8000-complaints-20200916-p55w7q.html>

Prime Minister and Cabinet

The National Women's Alliances

Status: **Unclear**

The Office for Women has committed to providing funding of \$281,000 in both the 2018-19 and 2019-20 years for each of the six National Women's Alliances.¹⁰ Together, the six Alliances that are Australian Women Against Violence Alliance; Equality Rights Alliance; Economic Security4Women; Harmony Alliance; National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance; and the National Rural Women's Coalition represent over 180 women's organisations across Australia. There was no specific amount announced in the 2020-21 Budget for the National Women's Alliances for the next 3-4-year period.

Currently all National Women's Alliances are funded until March 2021.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

Status: **ongoing**

There has been an increase in the funding to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). According to the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (the Act) WGEA is charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. WGEA annually collects data against standardised gender equality indications (GEIs):

- GEI 1: gender composition of the workforce
- GEI 2: gender composition of governing bodies
- GEI 3: equal remuneration between women and men
- GEI 4: availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees and to working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
- GEI 5: consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace
- GEI 6: sex-based harassment and discrimination.

The allocated funding is as follows:

	MILLIONS	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
WGEA	B. 2019-20	6.305	6.284	9.611	
	B. 2020-21			10.924	9.572

Source: *The Prime Minister and Cabinet Budget Statement*, p. 341

AWAVA welcomes the continued funding of WEGA and recommends for the funding term to longer than from year to year to enable effective work planning.

¹⁰ See Women's Economic Security Statement

Department of Home Affairs

Increased mandatory checks on Partner Visas

Status: **new and concerning**

Migration Program – enhancing Family Stream Migration outcomes

(Payments (\$m))	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Department of Home Affairs	15.6	-34.4	2.4	21.3

Budget Paper 2, page 10

This budget measure includes adding mandated character checks for Partner visas application and English language test to the existing family violence provisions within the Partner visa program. These changes will aim to “support English language acquisition and enhance social cohesion and economic participation outcomes. This measure is estimated to increase receipts by \$4.9 million over the forward estimates period.”

See the impact of these reforms [here](#).

AWAVA, along with other civil society organisations have been advocating for the greater support for women who are on temporary visas. Proposed character check and English language test are unlikely to address the scope of issues this cohort of women experiences. Instead, it may further stigmatise the victims/survivors of violence who are not able to speak English or who are not able to meet the favourable ‘character check’. Our recommendations are underpinned by a rights-based approach whereby the human rights and dignity of the women are upheld through the provision of social services. For the full list of recommendations, please refer to the [Blueprint For Reform](#).

Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Respect Matters

Status: **Unclear**

Last year budget (2019-20) allocated 2.8 million towards Respect Matters program to encourage respectful relationships and support student safety and wellbeing. This year budget appears to have spent only 363 000 out of the allocated 1.5 million for the 2019-2020. AWAVA has received a confirmation that all allocated funding will be used, yet this has not been reflected into forward estimates.

	MILLIONS	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
DELIVERING RESPECT MATTERS	B. 2019-20*	1,500	500	500
	B. 2020-21**	363	500	500

* Program expenses 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support, 2019-2020 Budget, Department of Education and Training Portfolio Budget Statement, p.34
https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/education_and_training_portfolio_budget_statements_2019-20.pdf

** Program expenses 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support, 2019-2020 Budget, Department of Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio Budget Statement, p.42
https://www.dese.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/education_skills_and_employment_pbs_2020-21.pdf

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner

Status: **Ongoing**

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner is responsible for promote online safety for all Australians, including operation of a complaints scheme to deal with serious cyberbullying affecting Australian children, image based abuse affecting Australians, the removal of online content that breaches legislative standards and block terrorist and extreme violent material in online crisis events.

Table 1.2: ACMA 2020-21 Budget measures
Measures announced after the Economic and Fiscal Update July 2020

	Program	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Office of the eSafety Commissioner — additional funding	1.3				
Departmental payments		400	17,596	21,453	-
Total		400	17,596	21,453	-

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications Budget Statement, page 148

In the 2018-2019 Budget the Office of the eSafety Commissioner has been allocated \$14.2 million over 4 years and \$10 million for Online Safety Grants program to support the delivery of online safety education and training projects for children. The 2020 Budget includes ongoing funding to 2023. The Office of the eSafety Commissioner is currently conducting a research on women’s online safety although no specific funding has been allocated to violence against women in the Budget Statement. AWAVA reiterates that all eSafety research and activities be conducted through a gender lens as online abuse is gendered.

Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Family and Domestic Violence Strategy 2020-25

Status: **no funding allocated**

In May 2020, the DVA Family and Domestic Violence Strategy 2020-25 was released to help veterans and their families affected by family and domestic violence. The Strategy includes information such as how to seek support and referrals to services. The 2019–20 Budget also increased support for former spouses and former de-facto partners of veterans who are victims of domestic violence. However, there were no specific budget lines for these items in the Department of Veterans’ Affairs’ 2020-21 Budget Statement.