



## Equal Opportunity Tasmania

### Equal Opportunity Tasmania

Phone: 1300 305 062 (in Tasmania) or (03) 6165 7515

E-mail: [office@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au](mailto:office@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au)

Office: Level 1, 54 Victoria St, Hobart TAS 7000

Post: GPO Box 197, Hobart TAS 7001

[www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au](http://www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au)

State Budget Community Consultation  
Department of Treasury and Finance  
21 Murray Street  
Hobart TAS 7000

By email: [communityconsultation@treasury.tas.gov.au](mailto:communityconsultation@treasury.tas.gov.au)

To Whom it May Concern

### **State Budget Community Consultation**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Budget development for the 2021-22 Budget.

I am aware of, and support, proposals for the adoption of a:

- gender impact assessment for State Budget papers, and
- gender impact statement as an attachment to Cabinet papers.

As Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, I am responsible for administering the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas) (the Act). The Act prohibits both direct<sup>1</sup> and indirect<sup>2</sup> discrimination on the basis of gender<sup>3</sup>.

Governmental policy is a core mechanism for addressing discrimination and gender inequity. Importantly, the Tasmanian Government recognises that 'the way policies and programs are developed and implemented can sometimes create unintended barriers to gender equity'.<sup>4</sup>

Currently, evidence<sup>5</sup> demonstrates that Australian women face worse outcomes compared to men across a range of different areas:

<sup>1</sup> As defined in section 14 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas).

<sup>2</sup> As defined in section 15 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas).

<sup>3</sup> *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas) s 16(e).

<sup>4</sup> Women Tas, *Valuing Gender Inclusion*, Tasmanian Government, undated, <[https://www.women.tas.gov.au/information\\_and\\_resources/gender\\_analysis](https://www.women.tas.gov.au/information_and_resources/gender_analysis)>

<sup>5</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Gender Equality in Australia – A Guide to Gender Equality in 2020*, Australian Government, (25 September 2020), <<https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/gender-equality-in-australia-a-guide-to-gender-equality-in-2020>>

- Australia's national gender pay gap is 14%.
- 64% of women with children 5 years old or younger participate in the workforce, compared with 95% of men.
- Women retire with significantly less superannuation than men.
- Women out-number men in completion of higher education rates but the pay gap exists for 16/21 fields of study at undergraduate level, and 16/19 at postgraduate level.
- 30.2% of boards of governing bodies have no female directors, compared to 0.4% with no male directors.<sup>6</sup>
- Women are more likely to report experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress or mood affective disorders than men.
- Women are five times more likely to be victims of sexual assault.
- Instances of sexual assault are increasing.
- In Tasmania, women account for 88% of sexual assault victims.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years Tasmania has sought to make progress in the area of gender equity, however unavoidable barriers emerged during 2020, the effects of which have profoundly and disproportionately impacted women. These effects were specifically in relation to unemployment, underemployment, lowered incomes, less secure work, greater household and family demands, and increased risk of domestic violence.<sup>8</sup>

The *Women's Economic Security Statement 2020* set out five key priority areas for Australia's navigation out of the health and economic crisis resulting from COVID-19, being:

- Repair and rebuild women's workforce participation and further close the gender pay gap.
- Greater choice and flexibility for families to manage work and care.
- Support women as leaders and positive role models.
- Respond to the diverse needs of women.
- Support women to be safe at work and home.

That same statement confirms the work will be informed by 'gender-disaggregated data, analysis about gender impacts and the diverse experiences of women'.

In relation to Tasmania's recovery efforts, the *Leadership & Participation for Women Action Plan 2021 – 23*, developed as part of the *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018 – 21* sets out the Tasmanian Government's commitment to 'ensuring that

---

<sup>6</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Gender workplace statistics at a glance 2021*, Australian Government, (25 February 2021), <<https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/gender-workplace-statistics-at-a-glance-2020>>

<sup>7</sup> Department of Police, Fire & Emergency Management, *Crime Statistics Supplement 2019 – 2020*, Tasmanian Government, (2020), 3, <<https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/Crime-Statistics-Supplement-2019-20.pdf>>

<sup>8</sup> Sharp R, Costa M, Austen S, *Each budget used to have a gender impact statements. We need it back, especially now*, The Conversation, (30 September 2020), <<https://theconversation.com/each-budget-used-to-have-a-gender-impact-statement-we-need-it-back-especially-now-144849>>



opportunities for women and girls are front and centre of our plan as we rebuild a stronger Tasmania'.<sup>9</sup>

In actioning the commitment that 'women and girls are front and centre' a gender impact assessment should be undertaken as part of the process for the 2021-22 Budget, and budgets into the future.

This is particularly important, as even prior to the events of 2020, Australia has been sliding backwards in relation to gender equality. In recent years, Australia has been ranked lower on a global index measuring gender equality, being ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in 2006, and dropping twenty places, to 35<sup>th</sup> in 2017.<sup>10</sup>

Between 1984 and 2014, a statement regarding budget measures which may disproportionately affect women was published at budget time. As a result, decisions were able to be improved, the myth of a gender-neutral budget was challenged and the Government was provided with substantive information about potential unforeseen impacts on women.<sup>11</sup>

To achieve what the Tasmanian Government sets out to achieve, it is vital that a gender lens is applied to proposed budgets. Such a commitment would ensure consideration of the impact of policies on girls and women before implementation, allow for informed decision-making to take place, adjustments to be made where needed and gender equality to underpin all policies.

Implementation of a gender impact assessment for State Budget papers, and gender impact statement as an attachment to Cabinet papers, will enable the Tasmanian Government to take a proactive approach to gender equality instead of responding to issues as they emerge. Such information and analysis will guide the formulation of policy proposals and expedite refinement and improvement.

As Tasmania responds to challenges, both new and old, building a gender lens into the process of budget development will ultimately result in socially and economically robust policies which are truly reflective of the needs of the population, and will support the Tasmanian Government's commitment to addressing gender discrimination and working towards gender equality.

If you have any questions, please contact me on (03) 6165 7515 or [EOT.Commissioner@equalitytas.gov.au](mailto:EOT.Commissioner@equalitytas.gov.au).

---

<sup>9</sup> Department of Communities Tasmania, *Leadership & Participation For Women Action Plan 2021-23*, Tasmanian Government, (March 2021), 5, <[https://www.women.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0032/148919/Leadership-and-Participation-Women-Action-Plan\\_wcag.pdf](https://www.women.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0032/148919/Leadership-and-Participation-Women-Action-Plan_wcag.pdf)>

<sup>10</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *Face the Facts: Gender Equality 2018*, 2018, <<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/face-facts-gender-equality-2018>>

<sup>11</sup> See note 8.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Bolt', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Sarah Bolt**

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONER

19 March 2021