



To: Hon Michael Sukkar MP
Assistant Treasurer
Parliament of Australia

2022-23 Pre-Budget Submission

Representing policy influencers from a broad range of sectors, industries and professions, Allied Women in Policy (AWIP) offers the following recommendations for consideration in the 2022-23 budget process.

Enhancing equity in policy outcomes

The budget should consider measures and policies to directly address inequality or disadvantage of some groups compared to others, especially with regard to economic inequality. The size and mix of public spending can have a considerable effect on inequality. According to the OECD, the potential impacts of public spending reforms on income distribution are twofold: a direct effect on the distribution of household disposable income and an indirect effect via economic growth.

AWIP recommends that the government could increase equity in policy outcomes by:

- Identifying systems and policies that disproportionately affect women (or people in primary care-giving roles) and remove barriers that hinder or disadvantage certain groups. For example, the cumulation of Superannuation for retirement – women or carers who take time off encounter disadvantages to their career progression and lifetime earnings compared to those whom stay in the workforce continuously. AWIP recommends including Superannuation on parental leave payments to reduce this gap.
- Considering systemic change to childcare to both create more sustainable mechanisms of support for the female-dominated workforce and improve access to and costs of childcare for families.
- Considering measures to address and close the gender pay-gap especially focusing on improvements in female-dominated industries.
- Providing support, programs and opportunities for female-led and female-owned businesses, including through government procurement processes.
- Applying a gender lens to all policies to ensure that the effects do not disproportionately disadvantage women.

Enhancing policy outcomes through inclusion in the consultation process

Consultation is a key aspect of developing robust, effective policy in a democracy. A transparent and impartial approach to stakeholder engagement can lead to better policy outcomes, more effective implementation of policy and anticipate issues before they arise. Throughout the last two years, there has been an understanding of the need for expediency to address key and emerging issues, especially relating to COVID-19 challenges. However, some issues that require more substantial analysis and stakeholder





consideration should adhere to timeframes commensurate with the gravity and magnitude of the policy change.

A recent example was the release of the *Draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* which originally had just a two-week turnaround for consultation. For such a substantial plan that would position public policy on this critical issue for the next decade, the original consultation period was inadequate. AWIP are pleased to see that the closure date has now been extended to 25 February 2022.

Many individuals and stakeholder organisations do not have the resources to meet the volume of consultations nor condensed timeframes. This can risk missing critical and diverse voices in the policy arena that would add value and robustness to policy outcomes.

There are many positive examples and best practice approaches to consultation and stakeholder engagement – in the experience of AWIP, these generally lead to better outcomes and better implementation.

AWIP recommends that the government could enhance stakeholder engagement by:

- Requesting Departments coordinate key or significant consultations so there is sufficient time for input by industry and individuals particularly on similar or related issues.
- Developing and piloting innovative ways to conduct engagement and/or to capture stakeholder feedback.
- Continuing to use and expand regular consultation forums to maintain ongoing engagement on a range of issues.
- Proactively identifying and approaching groups for inclusion in the policy process, especially where those groups will be impacted by policy changes.

About Allied Women in Policy (AWIP)

Established in 2021, AWIP is the Allied Women in Policy network, welcoming women who work, have an interest, or have influence in public policy. We aim to create an inclusive and exciting network where members can build relationships, empower others, and foster personal and professional development.

AWIP is about being the change you want to see in the world. Inspiring women and diverse groups to join the policy narrative by providing a safe and inclusive environment. We encourage and foster a diversity of views, experiences and backgrounds in policy making to enhance policy outcomes in the Australian context. AWIP aims to broker knowledge, provide pathways, and mentor women who want to change the world for the betterment of everyone.

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