

# MEDIA RELEASE

+ WOMEN'S HEALTH GOULBURN NORTH EAST

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RESEASE**  
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## **WHGNE's Response to the 2022 Federal Budget**

Local gender equity organisation, Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE), has welcomed elements of the federal budget, handed down last night but said it still neglected to fund some equity, care and wellbeing measures that a pandemic-weary public now expected of government.

Amanda Kelly, CEO of WHGNE, cited the inclusion of the Women's Budget Statement, in addition to the prioritisation of investment in care and the implementation of the newly released National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children, as positive additions to the 2022 Federal Budget.

"We're very pleased to see the inclusion of a comprehensive Women's Budget Statement which explores the impacts of the budget on all women, from diverse communities and different backgrounds, so crucial to achieving gender equality that is equitable and fair.

"We're particularly pleased to see the consideration of women escaping family violence in the formulation of housing investment decisions.

"The approach to the prevention of gendered violence is effective and evidence-based, but if we are serious about ending gender-based violence within a generation, we must significantly increase investment in the resources and services necessary to facilitate the approach."

Ms Kelly said that the women's health sector had long advocated for increased access to early childhood education and care and paid parental leave as central to achieving gender equity.

"While the government's \$4.7 billion investment to mitigate childcare costs is a positive step forward, WHGNE would prefer to see investment in free, universal childcare to provide carers more choice," she said

“Similarly, while the extension of Paid Parental Leave to 26 weeks is critical to efforts ensuring care is shared, we would have liked to see this change immediately, rather than incrementally.”

Despite the Federal Government’s discourse around prioritising a wellbeing economy, WHGNE would have liked to see more ambitious steps in this direction.

“More people in our communities recognise that equity, care and connection are fundamental to our collective wellbeing,” Ms Kelly said.

“We are disappointed that there is no increase in the Jobseeker payment, despite calls from social justice groups across the country.

“People who rely on this payment are struggling with the rising cost of living and many are falling below the poverty line.”

While people struggling financially were given no reprieve, high income earners will benefit through the controversial stage-three tax cuts – despite organisations like [WHGNE urging reconsideration prior to the release of the Budget](#).

“It’s disappointing to see that the stage-three tax cuts made it into this Budget,” Said Ms Kelly.

“\$254 billion of extra funding would have been more equitably spent on investment in public infrastructure.”

Ms Kelly said the newly announced Housing Accord was a positive step towards addressing the housing crisis, however government needed to phase out the highly gendered taxation settings that favoured high income earning housing investors.

“Things like negative gearing and capital gains tax enable people to accumulate enormous wealth, while others in our community cannot afford a roof over their heads,” she said.

“Government must pour more resources and investment into supporting people into secure, climate-safe, long-tenured, accessible, appropriate and socially connected rental homes.”

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