

Towards a Gender Equal Recovery

2021/2022



Gender Equity Victoria acknowledges the traditional custodians of country across Australia and we pay our respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and apologise for the human suffering and injustice that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced as a result of colonisation and generations of discrimination and marginalisation. We acknowledge that the removal of children has and continues to devastate individuals, families and entire communities and that the intention of those policies has been to assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a sovereign people who have never ceded their sovereignty of this land and we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's human right to self-determination. We are committed to working in solidarity and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve women's health, safety and wellbeing.

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Introduction 2021/2022

Victoria has a once in a lifetime opportunity, presented by the global COVID19 pandemic, to restructure its economy, public health and social support system to build back better in ways that benefit everyone.

A gender equal recovery has the potential to deliver significant economic and social benefits for Victoria. The International Monetary Fund has identified closure of the gender gap would help governments lift Gross Domestic Product by as much as 35%. Ensuring budgets are gender responsive is the right thing to do from a human rights perspective, but more importantly, they are proving to be the economically responsible decision, too.

Our 20/21 Budget submission was the first time the Victorian Gender Equality and Women's Rights sector came together with a consolidated submission of initiatives needed to drive better outcomes for men, women and gender diverse people. We were pleased that our call for focussed investment in gender equity was heard, and the first steps were taken to begin shaping a gender responsive State Budget.

“Putting women at the heart of our recovery from coronavirus will mean we recover stronger and faster as a community. It's the right thing to do - and the smart thing to do” -

Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Women and the
Prevention of Family
Violence.

But the journey Towards a Gender Equal Recovery will take more than one budget cycle. Sustained effort is required to create gender equal jobs and a gender equal Victoria.

We stand ready to support government's pioneering Gender Equality Act and continue the journey towards a gender equal recovery.

In our second submission on behalf of our sector, we present a vision for a gender equal recovery, with initiatives addressing the following key themes:

- Gender equal job creation
- Boosting Women's Health Services
- Gender Responsive Budget Architecture
- Imagining a Care Economy
- Increasing investment for gender-based violence in crisis and emergency
- Strengthening our gender equal communities

About our submission


Our submission is informed by our members. We have 42 women's and gender equity organisations undertaking work for women's rights and gender equality across a range of public, private and community sectors, with expertise in everything from gendered health, economic security and business, arts, sport and history and women's rights.

In addition to hearing from expert organisations, we also reached out to women across the State of Victoria for their feedback via a survey on the priorities for this budget cycle.

We are constantly improving our own practices of collaborative community engagement in the recommendations we make to Government about Budget priorities.



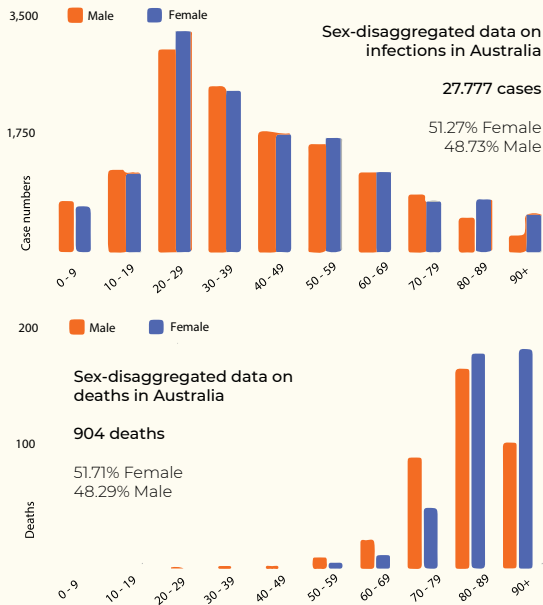
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TOTAL	271.2

COVID-19: A gendered health disaster

More women have been infected by the virus than men in Australia and more women have died from it too



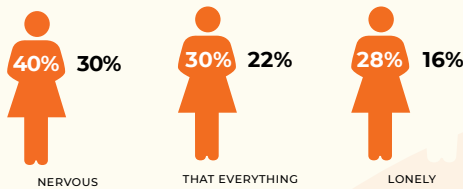
Sexual and Reproductive Health services for women were affected by the pandemic.

What women are telling 1800 MY OPTIONS
Callers to Women's Health Victoria's 1800 MY OPTIONS service have experienced:

- Delays in calling, with women presenting at later gestation (12+ weeks)
- Inability to pay for SRH services due to job loss and financial difficulties
- Family violence, including violence of a more severe nature
- Anxiety about the impacts of the virus on their pregnancy and fear of contracting the virus when accessing health services

Women's mental health was also severely affected

During lockdown, women are significantly more likely than men to have felt:



Other health issues were also being experienced – not all of them bad, but certainly needing further research and investigation as to how and why the pandemic resulted in these anomalies.

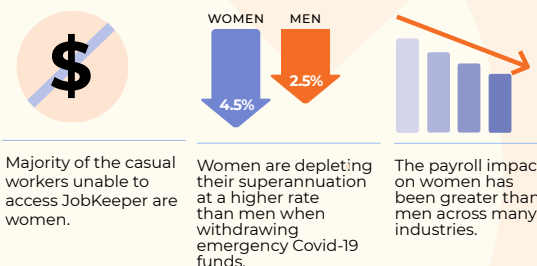
- Homebirth**
Pre COVID19: 4% interest in homebirthing
Post COVID19: 26% interest in homebirthing
(Australian College of Midwives)
- Breast Cancer Screening**
37% drop in Breast Cancer Screening
(Victorian Cancer Council)

The She-Cession: The Economic Impact



109,000 women lost their jobs in Victoria. Most jobs lost in part time and casual roles.

Current Victorian unemployment rate is **8.1% for women compared to 5.9% for men.**



Intersectional Experiences: of COVID-19

Migrant and Refugee Women

At the beginning of the global pandemic, women from Asian backgrounds experienced a spike in public racism and ostracism, as China was revealed as the origin point of COVID19.

50% of people infected in Australia are from migrant and refugee backgrounds, though people born overseas make up only 28% of the total population of Australia.

Nine public housing towers in Victoria were placed under unprecedented quarantine measures at the height of the Second Wave of COVID19 – the vast majority of Victorians placed in this situation were new arrivals to Australia.

“Hot Zone” suburbs were predominantly areas with culturally and linguistically diverse populations, highlighting severe gaps in the communication of public health information for multi-lingual communities and leading to stigma.

Women with disabilities

Group homes and care facilities were high risk sites for COVID19 infection and death in Victoria.

The presence of comorbidities in most COVID19 deaths, intensified anxiety amongst women with disabilities with many women choosing

long periods of social isolation at home, rather than risk exposure in community. This in turn impacted on mental health and loneliness.

High dependency on underpaid, casualised care workforce – who work across multiple sites to make ends meet - placed women with disabilities at high risk of infection and death if quarantine rules are breached. In some circumstances women with disabilities chose less than optimal care at home, to avoid exposure to the virus.

Access to affordable, high speed internet for telehealth and to address social isolation emerged as a fundamental human rights issue for Women with Disabilities during COVID-19.



First Nations

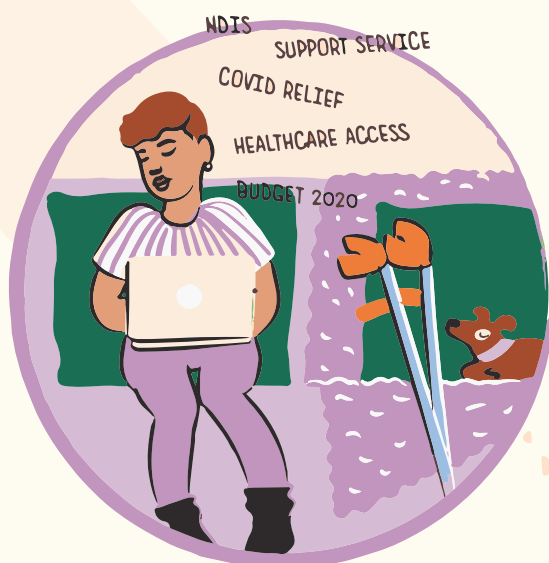
Strong action by Aboriginal Community Health Organisations to protect Victorian Aboriginal communities – at high risk of infection and death due to health comorbidities - meant that First Nations women were largely protected from the physical harm of COVID19.

However, home based lockdowns of first nations families, placed women at higher risk of family violence, with reports of increased demand in indigenous family violence services.

1 in 5 of Djirra's new clients experienced family violence that has been triggered by or made worse by COVID.

LGBTIQ & Gender diverse people

The presence of comorbidities in most COVID19 deaths was also significant for LGBTIQ communities who also have significant health disparities connected to HIV, higher rates of cancer, obesity and poorer mental health and suicide risk.



GENDER EQUAL JOB CREATION MEANS...



Gender Equal Job Creation & Social Protection

The 20/21 State Budget laid the foundation for a gender lens to be applied on job creation in Victoria.

109,000 women's jobs were lost during the pandemic. The \$150 million job subsidy program announced at the state budget creates 6000 roles for women which is welcome.

This is only 6% of the jobs lost. There is so much still to do.

To create sustainable employment that lasts beyond government stimulus investment, we need to create pathways and pipelines, working alongside targeted industries.

GEN VIC and its members make the following recommendations to create sustainable employment opportunities for women in Victoria:

- 1 **Invest in the Gender Equity Workforce to prevent gendered violence**
- 2 **Creating a gender equitable workforce through TAFE**
- 3 **Fast-tracking at risk women into employment**

1

Invest in the Gender Equity Workforce to prevent gendered violence

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended the development of a 10 Year Industry Plan for family violence prevention and response with commensurate funding for transition and enhancement. While the plan has been developed as required by 31 December 2017, commensurate funding to expand the workforce, particularly in primary prevention, has not taken place.

Gendered violence is a shadow pandemic, requiring intergenerational solutions integrated across health, justice, emergency services and violence prevention institutions, as well as adapted responses to suit demographic and geographic settings.

While great reforms have been made, since the Royal Commission, incidents of violence against women in the home have increased, sexual assaults and rapes are up as are incidents of sexual harassment investigated by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

The primary prevention workforce has not expanded to meet the demands of either the reforms of the Royal Commission into Family Violence or the new Gender Equality Act 2020.

According to the 2017 Family Violence Industry Survey, the primary prevention workforce in Victoria only has 250 people employed in it, mostly in part time roles. For every 1 person employed in primary prevention and gender equity, they are responsible for initiatives that change the behaviour of another 25,436 people. The demands on this workforce are too much and it is being set up to fail, if it does not receive an urgent boost.

We also know from the Industry plan, that the primary prevention workforce is 93.8% female. We recommend the tripling of the primary prevention and gender equality workforce over the next four years as both an imperative to fulfil the obligations under the Industry Plan, address increasing rates of gendered violence and as a strategy for gendered job creation.



This means creating a minimum of 500 jobs in gender equity and gendered violence to support:

- The translation of Respect Victoria’s mass behavioural change campaigns within a range of settings, including regional, health sectors, local government, schools and educational institutions and workplaces.
- State-wide rollout of the Workplace Equality and Respect initiative within the TAFE sector, including support for TAFES to transition towards gender equal skills based education and promoting more opportunities for women in trades.
- Regional Prevention of Violence Against Women Partnerships and Plans to deliver local based prevention projects to drive down rates of violence within targeted LGA’s and to undertake evaluation of what works in violence prevention design.
- migrant and refugee communities, where the need for multi-lingual gendered violence information and prevention initiatives must be tailored with cultural sensitivity and grassroots community participation.
- Emergency management and disaster response agencies to prepare for and mitigate the gendered impacts of disaster in communities.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Gender Equity Workforce to prevent Violence (\$M)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
BOOSTING GENDER EQUITY AND PRIMARY PREVENTION OF GENDERED VIOLENCE WORKFORCE	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	47.2
INTEGRATED FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGAL SERVICE	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	19

Creating a gender equitable workforce through TAFE

Women are entering the workforce in record numbers. Women currently comprise 47.4% of all employed persons in Australia and are 37.7% of all full-time employees and 68.2% of all part-time employees.

While women's entry into the workforce is one of the greatest shifts in the last 30 years, women continue to be disadvantaged and segregated in both industry and sectors, and in the education settings.

If we are to address segregation and create prosperity, we must create a gender equal Victorian TAFE system, addressing systems, structures, attitudes and norms that perpetuate gender inequalities and empowering TAFE's to implement the Gender Equality Act to deliver a truly gender equal skills and training system.

Embed transformational commitment to gender equity within VET

Transforming the VET system so that it is more reflective of the economic potential in a diverse Australian workforce, will require time and structural supports. CEO's with VET institutions, while dynamic and driven, cannot create change alone. They need to have internal supports – lead drivers of transformational change within the institutions – to support their work, as well as external communities of practice embedded into regional communities to deepen the work at a local level. Further, they need gender equity industry professionals to drive policy change and innovation at a state-wide strategic level.

To bring about sustained cultural change, through a gender equitable change VET sector, a regionalised and state-wide structure of support for VET CEO's, boards and Equality & Respect staff is required. Delivering on the Royal Commission into Family Violence recommendations, the Gender Equality Act obligations and the Macklin review to build a revision the TAFE system will need structure, staff and investment within and outside of the institutions.

VET policy (including funding policy) can be improved to ensure funded training providers hold workforce expertise, facilities and services are appropriate for the provision of gender equitable VET. This will support structures and practices that deliver gender equality workers to industry, and support the delivery of the Government's vision for the Victorian Gender Equality Act. Appropriate levels of funding is needed to achieve the transformational change required.

VET policy should be revised to ensure providers hold workforce expertise, facilities and services that are appropriate for the provision of gender equitable VET across all industries. Change requires structures and practices to be created that support gender equality in the VET workplace itself, and uphold the principles of the Victorian Gender Equality Act.

A VET gender equality strategy at state-wide, regional and institutional levels would enable long planned incremental change in a way that is practical for industry.

Prosperity through Gender Equity

Building the workforces for tomorrow requires whole of government collaboration – especially workforces that are gender equitable. There is a real opportunity for that collaboration in Victoria – between government, industry, providers (VET) and the gender equity workforce. The forthcoming implementation of the Gender Equality Act will provide a real and timely lever to address a major driver of inequality that exists in VET and address a barrier to prosperity for all Victorians.

Evidence tells us that the VET workforce is inequitable. In addition to VET's workplace, systems and structures, the impact of its services (education and training, provision of skilled labour) contributes to systemic inequity within the Victorian workforce itself.

To address this systemic inequality, the Victorian VET system a number of areas need to be addressed from VET pedagogy and teaching practices across all areas of learning, to VET funding and compliance policy, VET leadership and governance and industry engagement. It is a systemic and structural change proposal.

When combined with the future recommendations of the "Macklin Review of VET", is provided two levers to address inequality in the skills system and through this, have major impact on inequality across the Victorian workforce.

Supporting job creation and skilled gender equity workers through a she-cession

Creating gender equitable gender change within VET, not only works to create more gender equal job opportunities into the future, but delivers immediate benefits by creating jobs within the sector dedicated to gender equality. This strategy seeks to create the career and learning pathway and the development framework, that will develop and support the skills required to fill around 500 jobs in gender equity across Victoria. These jobs include gender and

disaster workforce, multicultural/bicultural workers as well as the workers in defined entities that over time should have a gender equity resource/officer.

This comprises a career and learning pathway that provides guidance on how the careers and education of these workers in all their diverse settings are supported and a community of practice for the workers. Together these will be vital to nurture this new sector in a sustainable way.

Building our VET system to support our new and emerging Gender Equity Workforce

Preparing our VET sector to sustainably develop and maintain the currency of Victoria's new and emerging gender equity workforce will require investment in developing skilled trainers and assessors in gender equity assessment and education, building appropriate pedagogical practice and, maintaining quality resources. Further, to assist in developing the broader workforce, and to provide clear careers and learning advice for current and potential workers, a career pathway will need to be developed which can be used by careers advisors in VET to :

Plan, support and develop the gender equity workforce across Victoria:

- Positioning and implementation of the Gender Equality Accredited Course and Micro credentials to build the gender equity workforce (WHV)
- Advocate for uptake and ongoing investment in gender equity skills and workforces through the state including the VET system aligning regulatory requirements (WHV/ GEN VIC)
- Support for a community practice for gender equity workers including educators across Victoria (GEN VIC)
- Invest to support implementation of the gender equity readiness tool (assessment of how ready someone is to work in the gender equity industry as a GE worker) (WHV)

Maintain excellence in gender equity curriculum development

- Supporting the maintenance of curriculum and resources
- Implement and develop pedagogical/ teaching practice of educators to align to requirements for transformational education for skills in gender equity – including updating the pedagogical framework and building the capacity of VET workforces to teach the gender equity courses (WHV)
- Work with the existing gender equity





workforce to build career and education pathways for the sector (including recognising existing trained workers in GE and TAE) (WHV/GEN VIC)

Developing long term policy solutions to gender inequity in VET

- Within skills and higher education division, resource labour forecasting and policy to undertake and deliver Gender Equity Labour forecast modelling and evaluation framework for skills impact
- Appoint Gender Equity Advocate/leadership to work with the Commissioner for Gender Equity in the public Sector to drive and oversee the implementation of the VET Gender Equality Strategy at a statewide level – across the public provider, and to support its impact through RTO's who use public funds
- Establish labour forecasting workforce model that is gender sensitive to assist in the planning for VET utilisation and support TAFE's to undertake impact assessments as per the GE Act requirements



INVESTMENT REQUIRED: A Gender Equitable Workforce through TAFE (\$M)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	TOTAL
EMBEDDING A STRUCTURE FOR SUSTAINED COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUITY WITHIN VET				
IMPLEMENTATION AND SCALE UP OF CURRENT GE PILOTS (PER TAFE (15 INSTITUTES APPROX. 500K PER YEAR PER TAFE)				
INCLUDING MAINTAIN AND SCALE UP OF GENDER EQUITY OFFICERS ACROSS ALL TAFE PROVIDERS	7.5	6	5.5	19
COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES TO SUPPORT GENDER EQUITY WITHIN TAFE REGIONALLY AND AT A STATEWIDE LEVEL	1.02	1.02	1.02	3.06
DEVELOPING A GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY FOR VET INSTITUTIONS USING GEN VIC GENDER EQUITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP	.45	.45	.25	1.150
PLAN, SUPPORT AND DEVELOP THE GENDER EQUITY WORKFORCE ACROSS VICTORIA				
CAREER AND EDUCATION PATHWAYS FOR THE SECTOR	.75	.75	.50	2
SUPPORT FOR A COMMUNITY PRACTICE FOR GENDER EQUITY WORKERS INCLUDING EDUCATORS ACROSS VICTORIA	.2	.2	.2	.6
ADVOCATE FOR UPTAKE AND ONGOING INVESTMENT IN GENDER EQUITY SKILLS AND WORKFORCES THROUGH THE STATE INCLUDING THE VET SYSTEM ALIGNING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS	-	-	-	-
MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN GENDER EQUITY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT				
SUPPORTING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE CURRICULUM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and develop pedagogical/teaching practice of educators to align to requirements for transformational education for skills in gender equity – including updating the pedagogical framework and building the capacity of vet workforces to teach the gender equity courses Investment to build capacity of learn local workforce to deliver non-accredited course for job seekers and through this support gaps in the gender equity workforce pipeline Invest to support implementation of the gender equity readiness tool (assessment of how ready someone is to work in the gender equity industry as a GE worker) 	.38	.38	.31	1.07
DEVELOPING LONG TERM POLICY SOLUTIONS TO GENDER INEQUITY IN VET				
GENDER EQUALITY ADVISOR OFFICE IN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING	1.9	1.2	1.0	4.1
ESTABLISH GENDER EQUITY LABOUR FORECAST MODEL AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR SKILLS IMPACT	1.0	0.6	-	1.6
TOTAL	13.2	10.6	8.78	32.58

3

Fast-Tracking at Risk Women into Employment

The unemployment figures do not tell all of the story about the economic impact of COVID19 on women. This is because, it is estimated that up to 320,000 women have given up finding any work at all, taking themselves off the job seeker cycle and withdrawing from the workplace.

In Australia, women are over represented in casual and part-time roles (68.7%) and are almost twice as likely to be underemployed, making them more vulnerable to financial insecurity and unemployment during an economic crisis.

In addition, women in rural and regional areas are far more likely to experience disadvantage than their male and metropolitan counterparts.

There is a strong link between unemployment and disadvantage and a significant impact on health and well-being.

Disadvantage magnifies with age: women retire with approximately half the superannuation of men (ASFA White Paper, 2013), making them more likely to live in poverty later in life. Furthermore, intersectional disadvantage means mature age women, survivors of domestic violence and women living in rural and regional areas are likely to be unemployed for longer.

Long term unemployment for women, particularly for those women over 45 years of age, is an intractable problem. However, there are solutions.

Women have the best chance of succeeding at getting work when job placement services are responsive and tailored to their needs and circumstances.



GEN VIC member, Fitted for Work, working with the banking industry, has developed a Women's Employment Recovery Program to assist women facing financial hardship due to unemployment or underemployment to find new, sustainable jobs through an online community of employment mentors, who provide peer support in a virtual environment.

Fitted for Work's builds women's financial resilience and independence, breaking intergenerational reliance on welfare. Women leave Fitted for Work equipped and motivated to thrive in the workplace.



What they do works. In 19/20 over 8000 women's lives transformed by the independence and economic security that work brings.

There is a huge opportunity with a strong commitment and the right investment, to take this successful approach to the next level across Victoria.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY PROGRAM



Dedicated Helpline



Virtual workshops delivered online



Regular virtual group check-ins



Online peer community



SheWorks employment opportunities

The program, which has been successfully delivered on a fee for service basis for women hardship clients at the CBA, is adaptable as a COVID19 Women's Employment Recovery Program.

Regional women's hubs for work, entrepreneurialism and innovation.

The intersection of the bushfire crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic has left women in rural and regional areas disproportionately vulnerable to unemployment and financial hardship. Job losses for women have been far greater in rural and regional areas.

Several of our members are deeply invested in the idea of creating regional based women's hubs which would encourage women impacted by drought, fire and the pandemic to rebuild livelihoods in their communities with the

support of a dedicated economic infrastructure for success.

Fitted for Work's Regional Women's Hub is envisaged as follows:

The hubs would reinvigorate communities and reduce social isolation, offer women entry level volunteer positions to provide sense of purpose, opportunity for social impact and positive contribution and counteracts the effects of stress, anxiety and depression, create pathways to reskill and find new employment and provide networks and opportunities to build on practical knowledge

Rural and regional women's health services have also been building partnerships at a regional level to boost rural women's opportunities for greater economic security.

REGIONAL WOMEN'S HUB



INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Fast Tracking At Risk Women into Employment (\$M)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY PROGRAM	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	60.0
REGIONAL WOMEN'S HUB	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	3.04
TOTAL	15.76	15.76	15.76	15.76	63.04



Boosting Women's Health Services

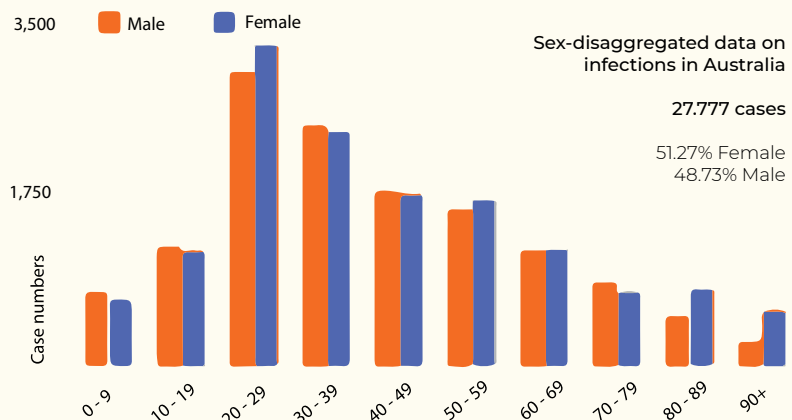
More women have been infected by COVID19 than men in Australia and more women have died from the virus as well.

The gendered nature of health implications of the virus are extensive, with the impact on women leading to higher rates of mental health disorders (resulting in a 2800% increase to the Alfred Hospital's mental health clinic), a reluctance to seek medical support for sexual and reproductive health issues, including pregnancy and birth (resulting in a 26% increase in home-birthing) and delays in accessing treatment for treatment breast cancer (resulting in a 37% drop in screenings)

As we build back from a second wave COVID19 quarantine, it will be important that Victorian women once again access the medical and health services they need. Women need to understand new health options available to them – including the range of flexible health service delivery, less invasive treatments and strategies for improving self-care, personal

safety and individual wellbeing. Further, as a vaccine becomes available, it will be necessary to respond to any concerns, criticisms or doubts placed on the efficacy of mass immunisations.

Investing in the health of women and girls is not just important for individuals, but to the Victorian community as a whole. In 2020 research conducted by Michelle Remme, Professor Anna Vassall and colleagues (BMJ, 2020), found investment in women's health could be among the "best buys" for broader economic development and societal wellbeing. This is



because women's health and wellbeing are intimately linked to the care and wellbeing of families and children, as well as the provision of care across the community. Healthier women and their children contribute to more productive and better-educated societies (Onarhein; Iversen and Bloom; PLoS One, 2016).

Since 1988, Women's Health Services (WHS) have been fundamental infrastructure in the provision of preventative health measures in Victoria, delivering projects, programs and services to 50.9% of the population. But the history of Women's Health Services goes much further back, with origins in the women's equality movements of the 1970's, when health information was delivered through grassroots consciousness raising.

Today, Women's Health Services are centres of excellence in gendered health promotion and prevention, winning awards for their innovations and achievements. But despite decades of policy and health reform success that has made the lives of Victorian women safer and stronger, they remain small, dedicated but undervalued services.

Changing demographics

In 2011 the total Victorian population of females (ABS) was 2.796 million. In 2019 the number of females in Victoria had grown to 3.329 million.

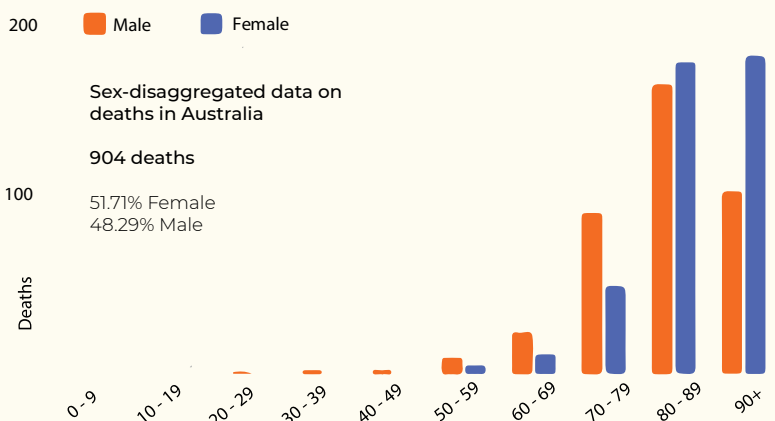
In addition to this, those females in the estimate resident population from countries other than Australia grew from 577,180 in 1996 to 964,840 in 2016 across some 200 plus, countries of birth. As the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health points out in its 20/21 submission to the Victorian Government's Annual Budget:

"The population of migrant women in Victoria doubled over the previous ten-year period, and numbers will continue to grow. Population projections estimate a net increase of 2.9 million migrants by 2056, including a net increase of at least 44,000 migrant women per year. In 2020 over one million migrant women call Victoria home"

Increased demand due to COVID19 pandemic

The global COVID19 demanded even more of the sector, with Women's Health Services called on to:

- Apply a gendered lens on the consequences of COVID19, in relation to response and planning for a gender equal recovery;



Women's Health Services have not received an increase in core funding since their establishment in 1988. Women's Health Services are expected to be doing more with less, resulting in missed opportunities and increased risk of gender inequity across the Victorian health care system.

- Address the mental health consequences of COVID19 on women;
- Influence policy with regard to engagement of migrant and refugee women in the community, including during public housing lockdowns;
- Design and roll out specific primary prevention campaigns on women's health during the pandemic
- Educate frontline staff and local government officials on the connection between disasters and gendered stereotypes and gendered violence
- Support the primary prevention workforce
- Advocate for continued health promotion and primary prevention work to support women during the pandemic including applying a gender lens to recovery
- Advocate for state and federal COVID response and recovery strategies to be inclusive of women's sexual and reproductive health needs, especially migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities and women in rural and regional areas
- To respond to disproportionate impact on gender equality, including increased domestic and caring responsibilities, increased financial impact through loss of income, experience of gendered violence and increased risk to predominantly women front line healthcare workers

Interest in the health and wellbeing benefits of gender equity increase

Significant changes in policy have occurred since the last review of the guidelines. The implementation of recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the creation of new family violence prevention infrastructure, a Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy and a new Gender Equality Act have increased demand for the expertise of Women's Health Services.

In addition, changes to demography have also impacted WHS capacity to serve women in community with adequate health promotion and prevention initiatives. Victoria's population has grown significantly with the number of women being served by the WHS program jumping from 2.796 million in 2011 to 3.329 million in 2019.

Addressing gender inequities in Victoria with a specific focus on health

Women are the highest users of health facilities in Australia. They are more likely to be hospitalised than men and they are more likely to see professionals for a health condition (17.5% compared to 12.6%). Further, the sexual and reproductive health needs of women mean women require tailored health interventions and approaches at different stages of the life-



course, with particular needs during child-bearing years.


Women have unique health service needs, however the application of gender norms, sexual and biological stereotyping and the poor use of sex and gender disaggregated data often results in gender inequities in the health care system.


Women's Health Services counteract gendered health inequities by ensuring Victorian women have access to tailored, gendered health information with which to navigate healthcare choices across the Victorian health system while also working to address the underlying causes of women's ill-health. We focus our services in the areas of health promotion of women's health and wellbeing to address the social determinants that intersect with gender, and lead to poor health outcomes for women.

The opportunities and risks for health promotion and prevention with a gendered lens have changed significantly in the last five years. There has been significant legislative change, policy reform and government investment in enhancing gender equality, preventing and responding to family violence, responding to massive bushfires that were evidently exacerbated by climate change, and implementing unprecedented response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6 Key Priorities: The Women's Health Services Council argues for -

Priority 1: Increase investment in the Women's Health Program	
1. Incrementally increase investment for health prevention and promotion, including family violence prevention, from 2-3% to 9-12% of Victorian health and violence response expenditure.	
2. Boost Women's Health Services funding in recognition of changes in population and demographics, the impact of COVID19, to restore historic funding cuts and improve gendered data collection via the Women's Health Atlas.	\$8.1M
3. Boost Multicultural Centre for Women's Health in recognition of changes in population and demographics for migrant and refugee women, the impact of COVID19 and historic funding cuts to support bilingual educators and translation services.	\$4.2M
4. Fund exploration of dedicated First Nations resources within the Women's Health Program, to ensure that the sexual and reproductive health, health consequences of gender inequity and gendered violence and mental health issues for First Nations women are integrated or aligned with the Women's Health Program. Funding should support collaboration between the Women's Health Service's Council and one or all of the following First Nations agencies - Koorie Women Mean Business and/or Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and/or Djirra.	\$0.6M
5. Support alignment between LGBTIQ health services and the Women's Health Program to ensure women's health promotion and primary prevention, especially sexual and reproductive health, provides for queer and trans people.	
6. Support Gender Equity Victoria's secretariat support to the Women's Health Services Council.	\$0.34 M

Priority 2: Support gender equity in Victorian women's health and wellbeing outcomes	
7. Prioritise the promotion of gender equity and prevention of gender inequity through the Women's Health Program, ensuring Victorian Women's Health Priorities include recognition of the health inequities caused by economic insecurity and other social disadvantages of women.	
8. Resource the Action for Gender Equality Partnership to support gender equal transformation across public sector health organisations.	\$3.3 M
9. Dedicate resources to address the health consequences of gender inequity on Victorian women.	\$5.1 M
Priority 3: implementation of a Victorian Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy	
10. Continued and increased investment in 1800 My Options to improve access pathways for all women to affordable contraception, abortion and sexual health.	\$2.5 M
11. Provide funding for Womens' Health Services to establish and provide leadership and capacity building for SRH in all regions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthering their role as leadership and coordinating agencies in their regions around SRH needs assessment, training, and capacity building. • Undertaking health promotion efforts to enhance SRH and rights, increase access to SRH services and reduce stigma and discrimination at community level and within primary care on abortion • Ensure a specific focus on regional and rural Women's Health Services to ensure equal access to SRH across Victoria. • Supporting strategic networking and coordination of SRH activities at the local level through an SRH COP. 	\$6.8 M
12. Ensure SRH services are accessible and culturally sensitive for key priority populations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations to ensure SRH is accessible and culturally sensitive for this population. • Further consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to confirm further investments in a future plan relevant to this population. • Develop a specific SRH strategy with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. • Invest in the Aboriginal health workforce to develop and provide culturally appropriate and community led health literacy interventions on SRH for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. • Invest in VACCHO to provide training and capacity building to health services to ensure they are culturally safe and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women. • Invest in Women with Disability led organisations to ensure SRH is accessible and culturally sensitive for this population. • Further consultation with Women with a disability to confirm further investments in a future-plan relevant to this population. • Invest in Women Disability Victoria to develop and provide culturally appropriate and community led health literacy interventions on SRH for women with a disability. • Invest in Women Disability Victoria to provide training and capacity building to health services to ensure they are culturally safe and accessible for women with a disability. • Invest in migrant and refugee led organisations to ensure SRH is accessible and culturally sensitive for this population. • Further consultation with migrant and refugee women to confirm further investments in a future-plan relevant to this population. • Invest in the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to develop and provide culturally appropriate and community led health literacy interventions in language on SRH for migrant and refugee communities. • Invest in Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to provide training and capacity building to health services to ensure they are culturally safe and accessible for women with a disability. 	\$7.6 M

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in organisations led by those with diverse sexual orientation and gender diversity to ensure SRH is accessible and culturally sensitive for this population Further consultation with communities with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity to confirm further investments in a future-plan relevant to this population. Invest in the organisations led by those with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity to develop and provide culturally appropriate and community led health literacy interventions for this community. Invest in organisations led by those with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity to provide training and capacity building to health services to ensure they are culturally safe and accessible for this population. 	
Priority 4. Recognise the importance of gendered violence prevention	
13. Recognise and provide core funding for the 9 Prevention of Violence Against Women Partnerships to support 500 strong organisational partners across the State as fundamental primary prevention of gendered violence infrastructure in the State of Victoria. Maintain the program on an ongoing basis for collective, intergenerational impact.	\$3.4M
14. Dedicate funding to PVAW Regional Partnerships to support Local health promotion campaigns aligned to Respect Victoria's 16 Days of Activism Campaign	\$0.48M
Priority 5. Mental health & wellbeing for women	
15. Prioritise women's mental health and wellbeing continue to be included as a Victorian Women's Health Priority through the Women's Health Program	\$3.4M
16. Fund Women's Health Victoria to lead and coordinate the Women's Mental Health Alliance, and provide statewide leadership in policy, research and advocacy in women's mental health	\$1.2M
17. Fund Women's Health Services to promote and prevent mental health in women through the application of local and intersectional gender lens on service provision and undertake primary prevention/mental health promotion activities in local areas and with priority population groups.	\$3.8M
Priority 6: Research and action on women in a changing society – climate change and pandemic recovery	
18. Create a statewide Gender & Disaster workforce across the whole of government to promote resilience in communities and prevent a return to rigid gender roles and greater risk of gendered violence after disaster.	
19. Scale up the award-winning Gender & Disaster Pod is scaled up for state-wide application through Women's Health Services in anticipation of future disaster preparedness, early intervention and response.	\$6.8M

For more information on the importance of investing in women's health, check out the GEN VIC's Women's Health Services Council: *Priorities for Women's Health Services 2021-2024* on our website www.genvic.org.au

Priorities for investment to support women with cancer

Access to holistic, person-centred care for Victorians with cancer outside of the acute care system remains limited, particularly in rural and regional areas and for women with cancers other than breast and gynaecological cancers.

Given that for many women diagnosed with cancer including rare cancers, peer support and access to information is limited or non-existent, these resources should be available to all who might find it a useful adjunct to their clinical care. The significant infrastructure provided by the non-government sector should be formally recognised as part of the treatment and life after cancer trajectory for all people diagnosed with cancer. This includes developing referral pathways and linkages from the acute sector out to the community.

With 18 years of experience providing professional peer support and information, Counterpart is well placed to expand the provision of peer support to all women with cancer and outreach into under-serviced areas across Victoria. Nearly 16,000 women were diagnosed with cancer in 20196. By expanding Counterpart services to all women with cancer, nearly 10,000 more women could benefit.

Women with less publicised and supported cancer diagnoses get frustrated and disappointed that Counterpart services are not available for them. Counterpart receives emails like this one quite frequently:

Can I ask why women with "other" cancers are not helped here? I'm a bit over ovarian and breast cancer getting lots of treatment options, lots of support options and lots of money but I have no support options... especially in rural areas.

Expansion to all women with cancer

Current Counterpart programs are limited to women diagnosed with breast and gynaecological 'women's' cancers. However, many women with cancers other than breast cancer – particularly women with rare or low risk of survival cancers such as pancreatic, lung and brain – have no access to peer support; the support that only other women who have experienced cancer can provide.

Additional investment in Counterpart is needed to extend the provision of professional peer support and information services to all Victorian women with cancer to respond to this need and ensure all women with cancer can live well.

Outreach

Women with cancer outside Melbourne have limited access to peer support programs, particularly in rural and regional Victoria. Over the last four years, Counterpart has increased equity of access to information by providing its services closer to where women live and through increased use of telehealth. Additional DHHS funding enabled Counterpart to recruit additional staff to work with outer metropolitan and rural health professionals to increase awareness of Counterpart's services; working through health professionals is key to women with cancer being aware of the services available to them.

As noted above, the two Victorian Government funded programs significantly increased the number of women having contact with the service. These programs have now finished. Philanthropic funding has also enabled Counterpart to expand its provision of webinars (via the purchase of hardware, software and technical expertise), which has supported the outreach work by providing access to high quality and credible cancer information for women wherever they live.

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Outreach

Investment has been made into developing relationships with health professionals and broadening access to services for Victorian women to:

- continue and build on the momentum gained through the two outreach programs, Counterpart needs additional funding to:
- work with health professionals across Victoria
- provide regional programs, such as well-being days, in partnership with regional health services
- provide technical support for an expanded webinar program

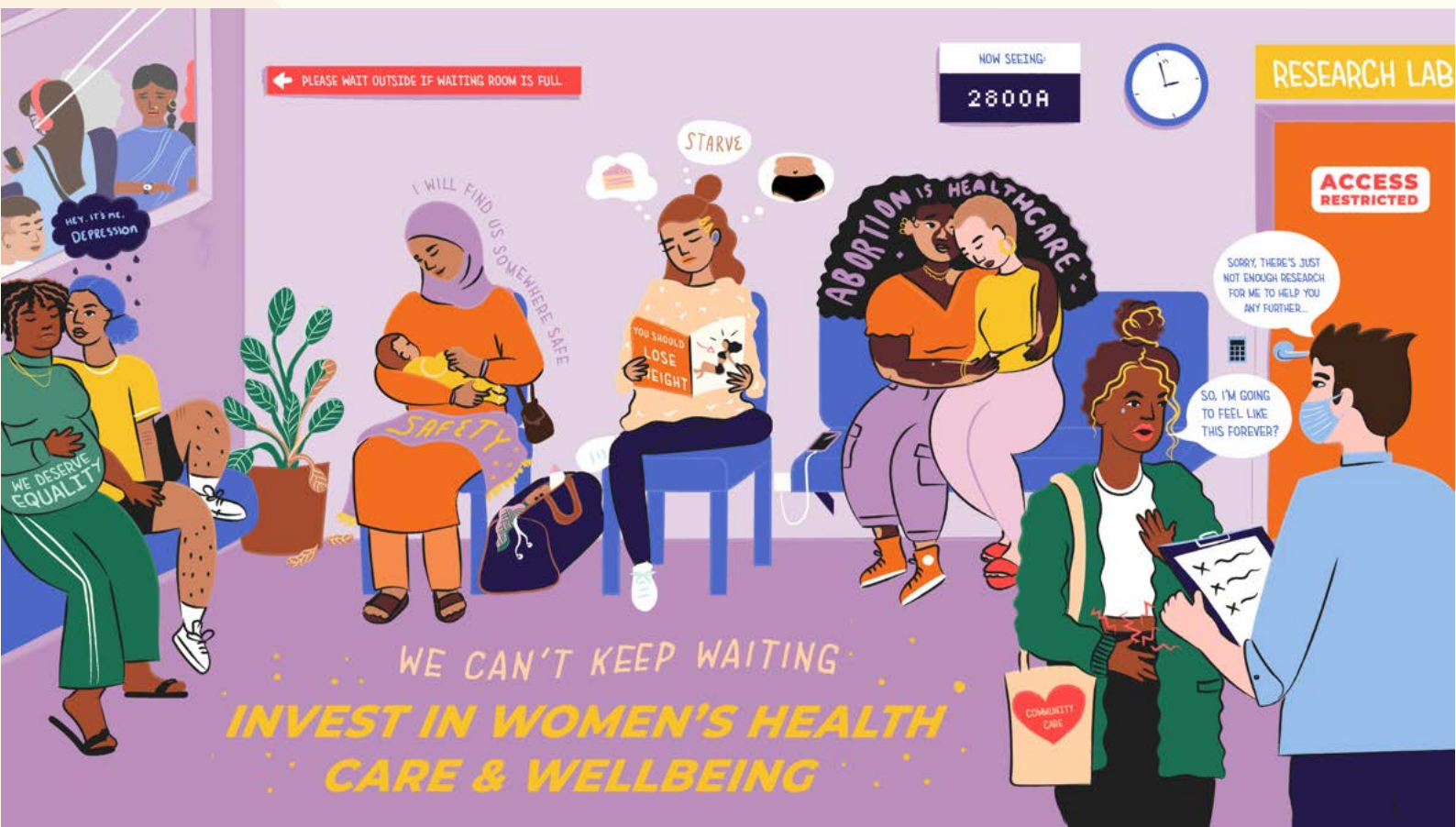
These activities are currently unfunded and will only be able to be provided at a very basic level if additional funding is not obtained.

Bridge of Support

Counterpart also requires additional funding to maintain and extend the long-established Bridge of Support program, where peer support volunteers take the services of Counterpart to women while they receive cancer treatment at either Sunshine Hospital or the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer precinct. This program is highly valued by both hospital staff and the women who access peer support in this way. Currently, Counterpart has reprioritised internal resources to continue funding both Bridge of Support programs, however this is at the expense of other core activities and is not sustainable in the long term.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: SUPPORT WOMEN WITH CANCER (\$M)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
1. Expand peer support to all Victorian women with cancer	.2	.2	.2	.2	.8
2. Continue outreach activities in outer metropolitan and regional Victoria					
3. Deliver Bridge of Support at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre, Sunshine Hospital and Northern Hospital					





Gender Responsive Budgeting

The investment in gender equity and gendered initiatives in the 20/21 Budget is a welcome first step in addressing historic under investment in dedicated gender equity programs, as well as addressing historic economic disadvantage of women.

A total of \$10.76 Billion was included in the Victorian Gender Equity Budget Statement. This represented 25% of total output initiatives in the fiscal year – which was a significant improvement on previous budgets – but still only represents 4.1% of total Government Sector expenses from transactions.

One budget cycle alone will not address the entrenched disadvantages of women and gender diverse people. Gender equity investment needs to be sustained across multiple budget cycles and the best way to do that is to embed a structure for gender responsive budgeting into Treasury.

GEN VIC and its members make the following recommendations to advance Gender Responsive Budgeting.

- 1 **Economic and Budgeting capacity building for gender equity and women's organisations**
- 2 **Lifting Women's Economic Productivity through Gender Responsive Budgeting**

The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee was midway through a review into gender responsive budgeting when the pandemic hit. Sadly, this has meant that the biggest stimulus package in Victorian history is being distributed without an operational, best practice gender lens or structural system for analysing the sex and gender disaggregated impacts of the budget being place.

What is gender responsive budgeting?

According to Emeritus Professor of economics Rhonda Sharp AM, of the University of South Australia's Hawke Research Institute and Research Institute for Gender Studies:

“Gender responsive budgeting is an analysis of the impact of the budget on gender equality and a process of changing budgetary decision-making and priorities.”

In a similar definition adopted by the OECD & Council of Europe:

“Gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.”

Gender responsive budgeting practices vary across countries, however there are three areas of gender budgeting

- gender-informed resource allocation whereby individual policy decisions and/or funding allocations take into account the impact of the decision on gender equality;
- analysis at the sectorial level of the impact of decisions on gender equality within that sector or industry; and
- overall assessment of the budget as a whole as to whether it is positive or negative for gender equality.
- gender-assessed budgets where the impact of the budget as a whole is subject to some degree of gender analysis.

Gender responsive budgeting is an accepted norm of good economic management in advanced economies across the globe. Responsibility for gender responsive budgeting is undertaken in these countries at both national and sub-national levels, and occasionally within territorial or local governments as well.

Within the G7 – the seven largest advanced economies in the world – 5 of the 7 (Canada, France, Germany, Japan, and the UK) have

incorporated gender responsive budgeting into their policy making, while Italy committed in 2016 to gender budgeting on an experimental basis. Only the United States is an outlier, which is not a surprise given it is also a non-signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Almost half of OECD countries have introduced gender responsive budgeting (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden), while others such as Italy, Turkey and the Czech Republic are in the process of introducing or considering it.

The Key Features of effective international Gender Responsive Budgeting are:

1. An empowered authorising environment for partnership between Treasury and Office of Women to undertake gender responsive budgeting. This may or may not be codified in legislation.
2. Gender economic experts within Treasury and the Office of Women who understand how gender norms underpin budget and policy setting processes and appreciate the impact of intersecting attributes of disadvantage and vulnerability on gender equity. Where required, Treasury and the Office of Women may also benefit from an external advisory body of economic gender experts – like the UK Budget Group – to support critical gender economic thinking that encompasses expertise in the academy, industry and community sector.
3. Gender equality policy with a focus on economic empowerment and justice for women, to correct historic and continuing economic disadvantages.
4. The collection or sourcing of regular economic data that is gender-disaggregated, accounting for differences of impact between men, women and gender diverse people.
5. The application of an intersectional gender lens across policy and programs to determine needs' assessment of women and gender diverse people at the beginning of a budgetary cycle across all portfolios.
6. A Budget process overlayed with a gendered lens that assesses the impact of outputs and asset investment, as well as savings and revenue initiatives, including any negative or unintended impacts.

Economic and Budgeting capacity building for gender equity and women's organisations

In the absence of gender responsive budgeting

architecture, Gender Equity Victoria has been maintaining a watching brief on gender equal expenditure across government. It has also been encouraging gender equity and women's organisations to improve their understanding of State and Federal Budget cycles and the economic levers of government, by providing regular training sessions in Understanding State Budgets and making State Budget submissions, in order to improve member programs and projects addressing the economic insecurity of women.

Establishing an independent expert advisory group on gender equal economics (the Gender Equity Budget Group)

To ensure the Victorian Government has access to the expertise of civil society organisations, gender economists and gender responsive budgeting academics to inform the ongoing development of gender responsive budgeting in the State of Victoria, a Gender Equality Budget Group should be established, modelled on the UK Women's Budget Group.

The Gender Equality Budget Group would be a community of practice facilitated by Gender Equity Victoria including:

- Economists and academics specialising in gender responsive budgeting, such as Emeritus Professor Rhonda Sharp and her colleagues at the University of South Australia, along with Professor Monica Costa at Curtin University and Professor of Law Miranda Stewart, of the University of Melbourne's Law School and fellow of the Tax and Transfer Policy Institute at the Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU
- Public Policy think tanks with a focus on addressing gender inequality
- And economists with expertise in addressing the unique needs of women's communities with diverse and intersectional interests, including gender diverse or LGBTIQ people, First Nations people, culturally and

linguistically diverse communities and women with disabilities.

- Treasury officials and Office of Women representatives.

The deliverables of the Gender Equality Budget Group would include:

- Providing gender expertise for the development of core tools to mainstream gender across the budgeting process, including the Victorian adaptation of the UK Women's Budget Group's Women Count: a new resource on gender-responsive budgeting.
- Conducting a gender economic needs analysis prior to the development of the annual State Budget
- Hosting events that explore economic challenges and opportunities for Victorian women and gender diverse people, including hosting A Gender Setting, an annual pre-budget gender equality breakfast designed.
- Producing ad hoc policy papers on economic issues relevant to Victorian women.
- Supporting independent monitoring and evaluation of the government's GRB approach.



INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Sustained Gender Responsive Budgeting (\$M)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	TOTAL
ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE GENDER EQUITY SECTOR	0.63	0.63	0.63	1.89
LIFTING WOMEN'S PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.9
TOTAL	0.93	0.93	0.93	2.79

IMAGINING A CARE ECONOMY



Imagining a Care Economy

The COVID19 pandemic has highlighted that the jobs we rely on to keep our communities functioning – those jobs that we came to understand as essential during lockdown – are predominantly undertaken by women in caring professions.

In the Victorian COVID19 Wave 1, essential workers fell into the following categories:

- Caring – medical and nursing, early childhood, aged, disability, mental health, family violence prevention and response
- Educators – Early childhood, school, TAFE and Universities
- Food security & retail
- Cleaners

This phenomenon was not just germane to Victoria but echoed across the world. In Canada, essential workforces were described as the “5C’s – caring, cashiering, catering, cleaning and clerical”.

Jobs in the care economy provide the scaffolding of all other economic activity. Without early

childhood education and schooling, parents would be unable to undertake meaningful paid employment.

Most of the essential service jobs were performed by women from migrant and refugee backgrounds in particular. This perhaps explains why both women and people from multicultural backgrounds were highly represented in COVID19 infection statistics.

It's not just healthcare professionals that need personal protective equipment in a pandemic disaster. ALL caring jobs will need infrastructure to keep the economic scaffolding going. It logically follows that a secure, onshore PPE manufacturing industry is required to provide for an expanded essential service workforce of carers.

We need an expanded understanding of “emergency service workers”. For too long we have valorised those workers who perform physical acts of bravery at the expense of care workers. There is room for an emergency workforce and volunteer brigade of care workers too. And investment is required to develop a system of scaled up gender and disaster workforce.

Care roles have rarely been prioritised in discussions about health, safety and economic wellbeing. Given the extraordinary dependency we now know our community has on these roles, it is time to develop a care economy plan, which aligns a wellbeing agenda with jobs growth and solid economic outcomes.



Invest in jobs in the care economy

GEN VIC supports increased public investment for the following sectors to increase jobs for women and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for the whole community:

- Early Childhood Education
- Teaching
- Aged Care
- Mental Health
- Disability Care
- Cleaning & public hygiene

Invest in industries that keep our care sectors safe – an onshore PPE manufacturing industry in Victoria and maintenance of sufficient emergency supplies to keep all care workforces safe and well

GEN VIC encourages the Victorian Government to invest in an onshore personal protective equipment manufacturing industry in Victoria to keep ALL of the care workforce safe, not just health professionals.

Too many women in the care workforce were left without PPE in quarantine 1 and 2.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Jobs for the Care Economy

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
INVESTING IN JOBS IN THE CARE ECONOMY	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$
CREATE A VICTORIAN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT INDUSTRY	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$
INCREASE FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, KINDERGARTEN, OCCASIONAL CARE, AND BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$
INVEST IN PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS TO "SHARE THE CARE"	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$
DEVELOP PRINCIPLES FOR A CARE AND WELLBEING BUDGET	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$	↑\$

The Gendered Economics of Incarceration - Keeping vulnerable women out of the Criminal Justice system

Women who have the greatest contact with the criminal justice system tend overwhelmingly to have backgrounds of social and economic disadvantage. Issues such as homelessness, family violence, mental health issues, drug and alcohol misuse, trauma from abuse, and poverty contribute to women's offending. Often these issues also play a role in creating barriers to engagement with services.

The current criminal justice system perpetuates further harm, and incarceration for women has other implications for their family and children. Not only is there is a significant cost to incarceration of \$412.83 per person per day, there is potential for a corresponding impact on families that potentially leads to other interventions such as child protection, increasing the likelihood of youth offending, and further perpetuating the cycle of disadvantage.

Women and Mentoring (WAM) proposes a gender-responsive lens to addressing the criminalisation of vulnerability and disadvantage. WAM offers a proactive strategy to reduce women's offending and minimise the negative impact of contact with the criminal justice system. Mentoring relationships provide long term support for recovery, building individual capacity, and can significantly reduce the female recidivism rate in Victoria. Mentors support criminalised women to navigate and access support services to address the underlying issues behind offending behaviour and pursue a pro-social identity away from the criminal justice system.

Whilst there is significant State funding going into building prisons and comparatively smaller amounts towards diversion and rehabilitation programs for women exiting prison, **WAM's focus is to keep women out of the justice system in the first instance.**

In Victoria, the recidivism rate is approximately 43%. The rate of reoffending among participants engaged in a mentoring relationship is significantly lower (15%). An evaluation report from 2012 indicates that WAM made a significant positive difference to vulnerable women in conflict with the criminal justice system through the provision of a formal mentoring relationship with a screened and trained volunteer mentor.

WAM supports vulnerable women with personal and practical assistance so that they may have capacity to respond to their legal matters; develop self-advocacy skills to navigate and engage with community resources; and addresses the intersectionality of the myriad complexities that lead to criminalisation at the fraction of the cost of going to prison. WAM trains and resources volunteer mentors to provide appropriate support to the participants, to share their skills and contribute to the wider community. The program is currently being evaluated by Lirata, with a formal report to be finalised in February 2021.

This funding proposal is to extend the work of WAM, to expand its service delivery to include working with young women, and increase capacity to deliver both face-to-face and digital mentoring to ensure women in regional and remote areas also have access to support whilst remaining in their community. We will also contribute to the evidence base of criminalised women's experiences of creating a pro-social identity to improve understanding of gendered pathways to desistance from offending.

WAM provides an efficient and cost-effective way to provide early intervention and crime prevention support to women who have been charged with a criminal offence. It helps to get lives back on track, keep families together and make a real difference. It also utilises the social capital within communities to break down barriers and foster social inclusion and integration.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Keeping Women out of Criminal Justice System (\$M)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
KEEPING VULNERABLE WOMEN OF OUT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM	\$0.55m	\$0.75m	\$1.09m	\$1.18m

Family Violence Training for Lawyers

Access to the legal system means all people regardless of their socio-economic status are entitled to access legal processes to protect their legal rights. Where the legal system does not adequately recognize and respond to gendered violence like family violence, then it significantly curtails a women’s access to justice.

The Law Council of Australia and the Royal Commission into Family Violence have both recommended that all lawyers receive tailored family violence training.

Lawyers not adequately being trained in family violence leads to women’s rights not being protected by the legal system.

For example:

- Lawyers not adequately addressing family violence in legal proceedings (especially family law) result in unsafe outcomes for women and their children.
- Lawyers minimizing family violence and not adequately documenting it in legal documents and submissions to the court.
- Lawyers not knowing about perpetrator mindsets and behaviors and how to respond to them. This leads to lawyers colluding with perpetrators of family violence, and often amounts to systems abuse against women.
- Lawyers (including police) wrongly identifying a women as a perpetrator of family violence (when in fact they are the victim survivor). This leads to women being wrongfully criminalized and caught up in the criminal legal system – and a complete loss of faith in the legal system by women.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Family Violence Training for Lawyers (\$M)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	TOTAL
TAILORED COMPETENCY TRAINING PROGRAM	.12				.12
FOUNDATIONAL TRAINING FOR ALL LAWYERS		.1			.1
ADVANCED TRAINING		.15	.15	.15	.45
TOTAL	.12	.25	.15	.15	.67

Caring for Sex Workers - Peer-led primary prevention and justice initiatives

Primary prevention initiatives in the sex work industry must focus on the most marginalised women in Victoria - migrant and CALD women, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders, homeless and LGBTQI+ including transgender women and transfeminine people. Initiatives need to be peer led and co-designed. The Vixen’s Collective remains an unfunded sex worker community service, despite being recognised as the representative body for Victorian sex workers.



INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Caring for Sex Workers(\$M)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
PEER-LED PRIMARY PREVENTION AND JUSTICE INITIATIVES				

GENDER DISASTER WORKERS HELP US



Creating a Gender & Disaster Workforce

Disasters, like the bushfires which have ravaged large parts of Victoria and the east coast of Australia during Summer 2020 and the global COVID19 pandemic occur within a social and cultural context. Gender plays a large part in determining how people plan and respond to disaster enabling emergency management to predict where people will be in times of crisis, their social vulnerabilities, and particular risks. In the aftermath of disaster, gender roles may be disrupted or intensified, with heightened expectations on men and women to live up to stereotypes of the “protector and provider” and women putting their own health and safety needs last. Tensions in gender roles can compound the damaging effects of disaster on families, which along with the financial and other stresses associated with recovery, can lead to an increased risk of violence in the home.

Understanding the relationship between gender and disaster, particularly the increased risk of violence against women, is essential to Bushfire and COVID19 rebuilding efforts. Gender and Disaster awareness improves the health and safety of individuals and families, promotes community connection, and builds resilience in women, men and people of diverse

sexual and gender identities in the aftermath of disaster. But most importantly, it decreases the likelihood of gendered violence re-traumatising people while they are already in need of recovery and healing.

- 1 **Create a statewide Gender & Disaster workforce across the whole of government to promote resilience in communities and prevent a return to rigid gender roles and greater risk of gendered violence after disaster.**
- 2 **Scale up the award-winning Gender & Disaster Pod for state-wide application through Women’s Health Services in anticipation of future disaster preparedness, early intervention and response.**

For a decade since the devastation of the Black Saturday Bushfires, the Gender & Disaster (GAD) Pod (a collaboration of Women’s Health In the North, Women’s Health Goulburn North East and Monash University Disaster Resilience Unit) has been at the cutting edge of the following prevention and recovery activities:

- Resourcing communities in bushfire and other disaster areas to develop plans, to build resilience, and to prevent family violence after disaster.
- Training emergency services, local governments, government caseworkers and community based social services to identify ways in which gender shapes disaster planning, response and recovery.
- Researching issues relating to gender and disaster, at times at the request of the Victorian Government’s Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Department of Emergency, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) and the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), including:
 - How women, men and people of diverse gender and sexual identities responded and recovered:
 - Relationships, including impact of family violence, after bushfire disaster
 - The role of women in Fire and Emergency Leadership
 - Building long term disaster resilience through a gendered lens.

The Gender and Disaster (GAD) Pod provides a comprehensive body of evidence and resources about the harms of gendered expectations in times of disaster.

Several of these resources have been recipients of state, federal or international awards.

The GAD Pod was recognized by the Victorian State Government as a key driver in the establishment of the state-wide Gender and Disaster

(GAD) Taskforce, co-chaired by then Emergency Management Commissioner, Craig Lapsley and then WHGNE CEO, Susie Reid. The achievements of the three-year GAD Taskforce are outlined in **two Australian Journal of Emergency Management journal articles.**

Of central importance was the collaborative development of National Gender and Emergency Management (GEM) Guidelines. The GEM Guidelines (funded by DHHS in Victoria and National Emergency Management Projects) include contributions by almost 500 emergency sector personnel, and are housed on the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) Knowledge Hub (<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/national-gender-and-emergency-management-guidelines/>). These guidelines cover three key areas of focus in emergencies:

- Supporting community gender equity and diversity;
- Gender-sensitive communication and messaging;
- Addressing domestic violence before, during, and following an emergency.

This submission seeks funding to expand the reach of the GAD Pod to support current recovery efforts and build longer term resilience and recovery infrastructure across the State of Victoria to include a central unit and state-wide coverage through the Victorian Women’s Health Sector. Auspiced by Women’s Health In the North (WHIN) on behalf of the founding members of the GAD Pod (WHIN, Women’s Health Goulburn North East and Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative), funds would be used to include a central coordination and resource unit to underpin state wide gender and disaster expertise at the local level. Further, funds would expand the implementation of the GEM Guidelines, deliver training at a local level and support further research and evaluation.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: A Gender Disaster Workforce (\$M)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	TOTAL
Create a statewide Gender & Disaster workforce across the whole of government to promote resilience in communities and prevent a return to rigid gender roles and greater risk of gendered violence after disaster.					
Scale up the award-winning Gender & Disaster Pod is scaled up for state-wide application through Women’s Health Services in anticipation of future disaster preparedness, early intervention and response.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	6.8



Strengthening Gender Equal Communities

Victoria is well known for its liveability, arts community, as a City of Literature, for its nightlife, coffee culture and as a sporting capital. But it is just as quickly becoming known internationally for its promotion of cutting-edge gender equality initiatives.

Whether it is the pioneering Gender Equality Act, \$Billion investments in addressing the scourge of Family Violence or hosting the first Women's World Cup Cricket Final on International Women's Day, Victoria is becoming a premier location to live and work if you're a woman.

Gender Equity Victoria has a vision to make a gender equal future in Victoria not just an economic and social benefit, but a reason to visit, stay and play in our State. But to do that, we need to invest in women's arts, creativity and sports at the same level as we do men.

- 1 **Put her Name On It: Recognising Incredible Victorian Women through Place, Art, and Tourism**
- 2 **Women Strengthening Women: Harnessing Arts Festivals and Conferences for COVID-19 Recovery.**
- 3 **Safe, Strong and Resilience Gender Equity Sector**
- 4 **Creating Safe Online Spaces for Women**
- 5 **Women's Information Referral Exchange - Building Leadership and Financial Capacity for Women**

1

Put her Name On It: Recognising Incredible Victorian Women through Place, Art, and Tourism

Victoria has a rich history of incredible women, who have shaped local, state and federal politics, literature, the arts, sport and so many other sectors. But despite this rich history, our public landmarks lack a gender lens. There are too few women recognised and honoured in street names, parks and gardens, state electorates, local government wards and via significant sculptural and other public artworks.

You cannot be what you cannot see. If girls and young women do not see their historical peers being honoured in the same way as men it sends a poor message about self-esteem, value and consequence. If investment in public naming of landmarks, geography and art is not gender equal, the State is missing out on opportunities to leverage its resources to address gender inequities and change the poor attitudes and bad behaviours of gender inequity which underpin violence.

Globally, we know that **less than 3%** of the world's statues are named after women.

Victorian Statistics

Only **6%** of Melbourne suburbs are named after women

Only **13%** of Federal Electorates in Victoria are named after women.

Only **18%** of Melbourne and Yarra Parks and surrounds are named after women.

According to Dr Clare Wright's new history project, A Monument of One's Own, only 14% of monuments are of women in Victoria. This figure includes allegorical women. Because there are few records on the total number of statues Victoria-wide, we haven't been able to find a stat for the % of women statues in Vic.

But in Melbourne where there are approximately 580 statues, A monument of One's Own discovered:

- Only 4.3% are women
- Only 1.5% are real women
- 1.4% are non-fictional, non-royal women
- 2.8% are symbolic or fictional women
- Only 1% are REAL women ON THEIR OWN in PUBLIC spaces

There is a gap in research, support and coordination in the application of a gender lens on place naming and commemoration of Victori-

an Women across government and the wider community. Women have just not been on the agenda, which is why there is little tracking of sex and gender disaggregated data and low level of effort to address gender gaps.

As the international Black Lives Matter protests have shown, there is a growing criticism of the lack of diversity within public commemoration sites and landmarks. As community attitudes continue to shift towards seeking a more equal, and representative society, it is in the public's interest that place naming authorities across government embed a gender intersectional lens within existing processes to achieve place naming parity.

On the eve of the implementation of the Gender Equality Act, Put Her Name On It envisages a whole of government approach to place, statue and monument naming to address gender stereotyping and develop new norms about narratives of power, value and importance across the State of Victoria.

While Put Her Name On It is designed to deliver best practice gender equity outcomes in geographic place naming, the project is not just a good thing to do because we have new laws about gender equity or an interest in promoting human rights. Though these things matter a great deal. It is a project with an purposefully economic approach.

The economic case for promoting incredible Victorian women

Put Her Name On It Project brings together gender equality, art, history and tourism in a project designed to create jobs and stimulate gendered tourism.

Creating jobs for women

Victorian women have been hit hard by the COVID19 pandemic. In addition to shouldering higher levels of infection and death rates from the virus, exposure in essential service care workforces, increased domestic responsibilities and childrearing at home, women have also lost jobs at a higher rate than men. And the job losses have been worse in some geographic areas, with regional Victoria reporting 78% of job losses due to COVID19 impacted women. Projects which are designed to create new work for women in the regions will be critical to ensuring gender equal recovery.

We know that some of the hardest hit professions by quarantine lockdown have been industries such as arts, culture and tourism, where a majority of women work. Projects which focus on rebuilding feminised industries hit hard by

the pandemic will also be critical to recovery

Creating demand for regional, gender based tourism

We recognise that Victorian tourism industry is worth over \$30 Billion to the state economy. The domestic overnight regional market, likely to be our primary source of tourism funds post COVID19, is worth \$15.5 Billion and that women make up 52% of the regional leisure tourism market, outspending men. While men spend more on business expenses in regional tourism, it is women who spend the pleasure tourism dollar, buying more goods and staying more frequently in overnight accommodation.

With women making up to 85% of consumer purchase decisions, women have been estimated to spend as much as \$198.9 Billion per year in the Australian economy. Creating spaces that encourage women to choose Victoria as a place in which to spend their disposable income will be important while global tourism takes time to recover from COVID19.

Creating demand for a gender based tourism means offering women attractions and experiences that appeal to them as visitors, as well as a well-targeted marketing to convert a desire to travel into actual visitation.

The project is estimated to create 40 jobs for women in regional arts, monument design and gendered tourism.

Supporting transformational change for gender equity – our proposal

Put Her Name On It is a fun, creative way of addressing the key drivers of violence against women, by challenging gender norms of who is worthy of public recognition. It fulfils the primary prevention goals of Royal Commission into Family Violence, as well as the legislative aims of the Gender Equality Act, Equal Opportunity Act and Human Rights Charter.

Put Her Name On It is multi-organisational endeavour focussed on lifting the public visibility of incredible women in Victoria's history. Partners to the project include Gender Equity Victoria, Victorian Women's Trust, Her Place Women's Museum, Australian Women's Heritage Register and Put Her Name On It project of Women in Gippsland. It is proposed that the partnership will be hosted at GenVic. The project also has the support of Dr Clare Wright, historian and author of the Forgotten Rebels of Eureka and You Daughters of Freedom.

Put Her Name On It is a whole of government gender equity project aimed at addressing

gaps in the recognition of Victorian women across Victoria. The following departments would be engaged: The Office of Women, Creative Victoria, Dept Jobs, Precincts and Regions inc Tourism Victoria, Local Government Vic and DELWP's Geographic Names Victoria.

There are three aspects to the project.

1 - Put Her Name On It Action Research – increasing public commemoration of women in Victoria

Public place commemoration can potentially play a transformative role in shifting representations to promote positive, equal and respectful images of women and men that reflects the diversity of our community. There is currently no coordinated effort in Victoria, Australian and possibly the world working to address the wide gap in public place commemoration. This project has the potential to create the foundations for change at an international level.

The objective of the project is to strengthen collaboration, mobilise authorities and engage with communities to build support for action to address the public place recognition gap of women in Victoria. Off the back of a successful campaign to address the systemic policy and practice in Victorian public place naming a collaboration of agencies is now working to build, enable and promote action on the ground.

Using an action research approach, the project will work with key partners (Women in Gippsland, Her Place Museum, Victoria Women's Trust, Geographic Names Vic) to establish the evidence base for public place naming, develop resources and programs to increase understanding of the importance and drive action among key stakeholders of the role public place naming and build relationships with 'other' partners including local historians, community and women's groups and agencies and regulatory bodies to motivate and build support for action to increase the public place recognition of women.

The project aims to:

- Strengthen collaborative action through cross sector representation and planning
- Identify data and promising strategies for public place recognition of women as a foundation for future action and evaluation.
- Increase authority and community understanding of how public place recognition equality contributes to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and can be a place for transformative change.

- Build authority and stakeholder capability and commitment to increase action that will increase public place recognition of women
- Celebrate and promote public place commemoration action and progress.

To achieve these aims, the project will:

- Develop and formalise a committee of key stakeholders to guide our approach and monitor performance
- Identify, create, document and promote existing and new disaggregated data sources on the current place naming situation
- Develop and document promising practices and a range of resources to guide authorities and communities to increase public place recognition
- Engage with public place naming authorities, community and other stakeholders through hosting or attending meetings, workshops, presentations to provide advice, build understanding, commitment and action to increase on the ground commemorations of women across Victoria
- Develop marketing resources and plan to promote the issue, stories of women and celebrate action to assist in building awareness and understanding on a boarder stage

2 - Finding Her Regional Tour

The Finding Her Regional Tour is an innovative regional tourism project making Victoria a pre-eminent local tourist destination for commemorating women's historic contributions to the State and promoting women in creative industries. With COVID19 making global travel more difficult in the medium term, innovations in local tourism, that reach profitable new markets and build regional opportunities to promote local arts, crafts and industry will be needed.

By honouring the historical contribution of women to Victoria within each region, Finding Her will empower Victorians to use their electronic devices and their private vehicles to explore Victoria's regions in a COVID Safe way. Creating a new tourism product perfectly suited to the post COVID19 environment where connectedness through digital and real-life is blurred.

Finding Her will collate stories that ALL Victorian women can identify. In a world where historic sites are being criticised for presenting a mono-cultural view of the world, Finding Her will challenge how Victorians view and recollect the past. Featured women will include Vida Goldstein, Lisa Bellair and the Forgotten rebels of Eureka.

Finding Her will see ALL women, understanding and memorialising Victorian women across intersectional cohorts such as Aboriginality, migrant and refugee backgrounds and women living with a disability. The project, with its focus on a mixed media of digital touring and touring that needs only use of a vehicle for self-guided road trip, means the community connection is affordable and accessible to all women. Finding Her reaches out to women in Victoria with stories of resilience.

Finding Her: a road trip to resilience will:

- Connect women across regions, building connectedness between places and communities.
- Identify historical sites of significance to Victorian women across the North Western, North Eastern, South Eastern and South Western Regions of Victoria.
- Identify gaps in regional areas without significant recognition of Victorian women and develop art and history memorials at appropriate identified sites.
- Innovate regional road-tripping of the sites through mixed media of digital and real-time touring.
- Join women together via historical, arts and touring groups.
- Draw a connection between the hardship and challenges women are facing today to the resilience of women in Victoria's past
- Build intergenerational strength and memory to benefit the health and wellbeing of all Victorian women.
- Capture collective COVID19 memory and a shared history of the pandemic experience
- Encourage COVID19 safe travel, responsive to whatever Stage of Restriction we may find ourselves in.
- Build a map of the resilience of Victorian women across generations - Highlight the importance of Victorian women's resilience and innovation to the state's history and future.

A total of 30 new projects arts and monuments projects will be funded in regional locations creating jobs for women artists across Victoria.

The roadtrip will target the regions of Barwon-South-West, Gippsland, Goulburn North-East, Hume and Inner Melbourne. Roadtrip design and delivery will see the conversion of research and data into the Finding Her: A road-trip to resilience digital and real time Map, managed

by Gender Equity Victoria & DesignJunkies. Examples of current sites that would feature on the Finding Her Tour

- Vida Goldstein, Victoria Suffragist, Vida Finally Gets Her Seat in Portland
- Warrior Woman Lane in the CBD recognising indigenous poet and activist Lisa Bellear
- The Eureka Centre, home of the Eureka flag sown by Victorian women, Ballarat
- Joan Kirner Women and Children's Hospital

Sites that require investment:

- Zelda D'Aprano memorial of her



Equal Day Action in the CBD

3 - Strengthening Victorian Women's heritage resources

Both the Action Research project and the Finding Her Regional Tour requires investment in securing the history of Victorian women. We are fortunate to have two resources that can support the project.

The University of Melbourne's Australian Women's Heritage Register, holds 3275 records for women and organisations in Victoria, including 768 entries relating to women candidates and MP's in Victoria. This record needs to be digitally updated to support the project over the next year, so that it may be used by Government departments and integrated into the HerPlace Women's Museum. The University of Melbourne has estimated the total cost of this project to be \$452,245 per year, but is seeking only the digitisation costs.

Further HerPlace Women's Museum, provides a site within the CBD to host and display artifacts and will curate information and online and live exhibition space, integrating the Finding Her Project.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Put Her Name On It, Finding Her and Strengthening Women's Heritage Resources

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-2024	2024-25	TOTAL
PUT HER NAME ON IT ACTION RESEARCH – IN- CREASING PUBLIC COM- MEMORATION OF WOMEN	.63	.63	.63	.63	1.89
FINDING HER TOURISM PROJECT: AN ARTS-HISTO- RY REGIONAL & DIGITAL ROAD TRIP CELEBRATING INCREDIBLE VICTORIAN WOMEN	.75	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.75
FINDING HER FUND FOR WOMEN PUBLIC ARTISTS INCLUDING FUNDING FOR A ZELDA D'APRANO EQUAL PAY MEMORIAL	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	7.5
STRENGTHENING VICTO- RIAN WOMEN'S HERITAGE RESOURCES	.3	.3	.3	.3	.9
TOTAL	4.18	4.93	4.93	4.93	18.97

Women strengthening women – harnessing arts, festivals and conferences for COVID19 recovery

Women are strengthened by other women. Women need opportunities to come together and build resilience, develop innovations and celebrate the success of their work. This is especially so when times are tough. Women care for each other – and for men and for children, too. They provide a rich care economy upon which the entire scaffolding of the State depends. We don't usually quantify the value of this work very well, but thanks to the leadership of the Victorian Government we know that the replacement cost of the care economy in Victoria is \$205 Billion. That's a lot of care giving, offered generously without recompense.

So much of women's work is unpaid and unrecognised.

For this to change, we need to start with acknowledgement and recognition.

And that begins on International Women's Day.

Current state of IWD in Victoria - there's no funding for community building

International Women's Day Festivities have been taking place across Victoria for over eighty years without Government Support for a coordinated program of events at a metropolitan or regional level. There is community event funding for Multicultural festivals and Harmony Day, Pride Marches and associated community events, NAIDOC week, Seniors rights and Youth week. But there is no dedicated funding for International Women's Day events and no attempt to coordinate a statewide calendar.

Amazingly, despite governments ignoring the celebrations amongst the private, public and community sector, IWD has become so huge, that it is now referred to as IWD Week, as organisations across the State of Victoria scramble to schedule events without conflicting with each other. Events are delivered on modest budgets often leading to women entertainers, guest speakers, facilitators being asked to provide services for free. It is counter-intuitive for a day focussed on recognising women's work to still be so underfunded that women hosts and performers are unpaid for their services.

Victoria is awash with IWD events but it lacks coordination or synergy, diminishing the power of its message and reducing patronage. Women Strengthening Women represents a long-awaited opportunity to coordinate and

amplify the excellent work of women's and gender equity advocates within the public, private and community sector. It is a chance to grow patronage and encourage more Victorians to connect to the gender equal spirit of IWD.

For organisations such as the Victorian Women's Trust and Queen Victoria Women's Centre, this would amplify their work and reduce duplication efforts in the production of "IWD organisational calendars".

The IWD March

Every year, an IWD collective hosted by Victorian Trades Hall facilitates a March through the streets of Melbourne where women call for greater gender equality and recognition of women's work. Despite commencing in 1931, the March does not receive any government funding or support, which means it lacks the resources to promote the event more widely in community or to encourage similar rallies in other parts of the State.

While other Marches (such as the Pride March) have been transformed into festivals (Midsumma) through integrated partnership between private, public and community sectors, IWD has been starved of the financial infrastructure it needs to thrive. IWD will always rely on volunteer activity, however structural funding support is required to support the Government's Gender Equality agenda over time. For volunteer, grassroots gender equity activists, resourcing offers new opportunities for powerful and creative, community engagement.



Melbourne IWD in 2017 - the "pussy hat" rally and on the eve of #metoo. Thousands of women gathered with music, song, dance and protest across the city.



The first IWD Rally in Melbourne in 1931 was attended by 50 women who led a march from the corner of Victoria and Russel streets, with a lead banner declaring "Long Live International Women's Day"

GEN VIC and its members have a vision of a rebooted annual Victorian IWD festival focussed on celebrating all of women's essential work for community and encouraging greater gender equality, especially in the realm of shared care for children and of domestic duties.

Women Strengthening Women envisages IWD as an opportunity for celebration and an opportunity to educate for change. IWD is more than a one off breakfast, but can build communities of women supporting each other, fostering new and emerging voices towards leadership and stimulating new and exciting economies for future growth and change. It should, as it was always intended to be, about women's work – in all its paid and unpaid diversity.

Community building for growth in global women's conferences

Building local women's arts, culture and other festivities within Victoria would also support Victoria's global tourism push once COVID19 pandemic is over. With this infrastructure, Victoria will be best placed to bid successfully for global women's conferences, such as Women Deliver, The UN's World Conference on Women, and to prepare for hosting a global women's conference in 2025 to celebrate 50 years since the International Year of the Women (1975) and 30 Years since the Beijing Conference (1995)

Women strengthening Women Project would contribute to COVID19 recovery in three ways:

1. Women strengthening women – digital community building for COVID19 Recovery:
 - Enable digital coordination of IWD 2021 (and annually thereafter) via the creation of a permanent Victorian IWD Festival Website. The website would enable public, private and community sector organisations to upload their events and for information about ticketing and promotion to be amplified through a central communication platform. This would enable disparate women's organisations at grassroots level to link up online.
 - All organisations signing up to promote IWD activities would be provided with a "Women's Resilience and Recovery Information Pack" bringing together digital resources that support women's economic recovery and mental health wellbeing.
 - All organisations would be provided

with an opportunity to feedback opportunities identified at their event to help boost economic recovery and support mental health for women.

2. A Women Strengthening Women Jobs Creation:
 - Create a fund to enable metropolitan and regional IWD events to cover the costs of hiring women artists, performers, hosts and facilitators (creating employment for x women). Ensure there is dedicated funding for performers, hosts and facilitators from First Nations, women, women with disabilities, women from migrant and refugee backgrounds and LGBTIQ and gender diverse people.
 - Hire women strengthening women coordinators across metropolitan and regional settings to boost engage in dialogue about what is needed to facilitate women's resilience, innovation and all aspects of women's work in Victoria
3. A Women Strengthening Women Conference in the Regions will:
 - Bring women of Victoria together to reflect on the impact of COVID19 on women in Victoria during November 2021, with a particular focus on rural and regional women, timed for International Day for Rural Women on October 18.
 - Build women's conference organising capacity to provide the foundation for hosting a global women's conference in 2025 to celebrate 50 years since the International Year of the Women (1975) and 30 Years since the Beijing Conference (1995).

Why focus women in arts, festivals and tourism?

Victoria is the festival capital of Australia. Annually, festivals make \$38.8 Million a year, with \$10.5 Million (or 20% of total income) coming from Creative Victoria.

Festivals that receive government funding, are more successful at growing patron numbers, support and their budgets. Over a three-year period, festivals that receive government funding grow patrons at a more rapid rate and also secure significantly more private and public funds over three years than festivals without government funding.

Despite the enthusiasm from corporate, public and community sector, the State of Victoria misses out on the promotion, tourism and creative arts benefits of a coordinated women's events program. There is no digital or other forum from which to coordinate and promote all of the IWD activities or #16DaysofActivism activities or any other women's conference activities taking place across the State of Victoria. This is a missed opportunity for Government and the community. The lack of coordination also diminishes opportunities to leverage sponsorship support in the private sector and develop economies of scale for activities and purchase decisions. It also missed out on the opportunity of building the reach of gender equality support and principles in community.

Putting International Women's Day on the Melbourne Festival Calendar would provide a unique marketing opportunity that includes the production of a statewide hard copy and digital annual IWD calendar. It would create statewide marquee events – with significant reach and opportunities for Government promotion, helping promote the Gender Equality Act and other world leading achievements of the government in promoting women. And it would be a truly statewide project – not just limited to the CBD – but embedding a regional approach.

Government supports a range of public facing festival activities for diverse and targeted cohorts:

- The Victorian Multicultural Commission supports Victorian Multicultural Week and the Premier's Cultural Diversity Gala each year.
- Midsumma Festival is supported by Creative Victoria and has over 33 years received funding and support to grow into a thriving, internationally recognised Pride event celebrating the LGBTIQ+ community across February.

- Yirramboi and NAIDOC week support indigenous arts and culture festivals.

Despite the global significance of International Women's Day, an annual march and 100's of events with 1000's of Victorian women participating, there is no dedicated funding to build up marquee events or a grants round to scale up community activities. The result is that much of this activity is performed by women, for women, of women – without fee, without payments and using free women's labour. The irony of the inequity of this is not lost on the partners in this project.

Further, the absence of public funding for this day has diminished opportunities to celebrate women's cultural and community leadership across Victoria and to drive a gender equality agenda that changes attitudes about and behaviours towards women.

Festivals & the future of gender-based tourism

Prior to COVID19, Victoria was a frontrunner in securing the internationally significant Women Deliver conference. While COVID19 has made global conference attendance more difficult, it allows Victoria the time to build the cultural infrastructure that makes winning bids like Women Deliver that much easier.

Further, in 2025 it will be the 50th Anniversary of the International Year of the Woman. It will also be the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Women's Conference. Victoria should be pitching now to secure or host a global women's conference supporting both of these events, cementing Victoria as a world leader in women's rights and gender equity.



Should Natasha Stott Despoja's bid to be on the Committee overseeing CEDAW be accepted, the opportunities to amplify Victoria and Australia's leadership internationally will also deepen. Her term would not be due to expire until 2025.

Women attend festivals – let's give them a world class one and stimulate local Victorian economy

The demographic profile of the cultural market for festivals skews towards women, with 52% of cultural festival goers in Victoria being women compared to 48% men. Women make 85% of all consumer purchase decisions. It is estimated that Australian women spent \$198.9 billion in the year 2015-2016. International research indicates that growth in consumer spending is intimately tied to women's labour force participation. International Women's Day is Gender equity delivers economic growth opportunities

and initiatives that understand this seek to reap financial rewards.

We'll create jobs

An IWD Festival will also create jobs for women. The she-cession caused by COVID19 has hit the cultural and arts industry particularly hard. As an industry with high numbers of women (50.6% of the workforce, 71% of graduates), a women's focussed cultural arts program of activities offers women's artists the opportunity to access employment and jobs.

Further the casual IWD ambassadors program would provide up to 40 women with 6 months of work each year to support growth of the event across the State of Victoria. In turn, IWD events will stimulate women's local economic activity through the hosting of forums, events and festivities within local settings.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Women Strengthening Women Through the Arts, Festivals and Conferences (\$Millions)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
WOMEN STRENGTHENING WOMEN – COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR COVID19 RECOVERY THROUGH IWD 21-25	1.2	.6	.6	.6	3
WOMEN STRENGTHENING WOMEN JOBS					
• ARTS & PERFORMERS EVENTS FUND	.25	.25	.25	.25	1
• WOMEN STRENGTHENING WOMEN COORDINATORS	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5
WOMEN STRENGTHENING WOMEN CONFERENCE & TOURISM BOOST	0.4			0.8	1.2
TOTAL	2.85	2.85	2.85	3.65	10.2

Investing in gender equal leaders in community

Gender Equity Victoria's goal is to minimise the harm of gender inequity across the State of Victoria, and over time, eradicate it. The Victorian Gender Equity Sector is growing. Organisations and individuals are engaged in building gender equality infrastructure within their worksites, local communities, regional areas and across sectors. There is a growing desire for interconnection and co-ordination between people and projects across the State. Further, there is a need for best practice capacity building, providing opportunities for international, national and state based industry experts to share new developments in gender equity design.

Gender Equity Victoria is bringing together communities of women in business, industry, economics, health, sports, arts, history and culture to promote the economic and social benefits of gender equity for men, women and gender diverse people. In two years, GEN VIC's membership has grown by 65%, with new organisational members joining every month. Within the next two years, the membership is expected to double again, as demand for its services grows. With the Gender Equality Act coming into force, it is anticipated that there will be further organisational and individual growth in membership and the services and benefits it provides.

Building gender equal communities begins at a local level – identifying individual and organisational leaders who will role model gender equality in their daily lives and share wisdom with others. It means linking people up – via digital hubs, conferences and training and development – to inspire them to keep going.

For example, we are at the early stages of implementation of a program of teaching Respectful Relationships Education in Schools. As young people grow and develop through knowledge and learning, there will be a need to take parents, families, sporting and other recreational clubs and local businesses enveloping schools along on the journey. If messaging in the classroom is immediately undercut at home and in the local surrounds, the investment in RREIS will have been wasted. Investing in gender equal leaders would mitigate against wasted resources, by harnessing trusted voices in community to echo the learning in schools.

While the Gender Equality Act is focussed on transformation within public sector organisations, the private and community sector will

inevitably feel its affects nonetheless. Preparing for and encouraging business and the community sector to embrace the Gender Equality Act will provide a compounding wave of change. Building infrastructure to support community knowledge about the Act and how it can be embraced within community will amplify the efforts of the legislation.

Gender equity practice is anticipated to thrive and evolve as more and more practitioners join the sector. The Gender Equality Act's implementation in 2021 will see the continued growth of the gender equality sector as it responds to public sector demand for expertise in gender audits, gender action plans, training and evaluation. Not only will these workers benefit from centralised practice development through GEN VIC, but they will be supported to grow their practice as gender equality knowledge and expertise expands and evolves not only locally, but globally.

Through GEN VIC, gender equality practitioners will have access to communities of practice, a gender equity conference, free online learning, access to workshops to support the implementation of the Gender Equality Act and more. Without access to practice development, the sector risks inconsistency in the Gender Equality Act's implementation and less scope to develop as practitioners.

Celebrating gender equity success

As the sector grows, it will be important to celebrate successes. That is why GEN VIC is recommending the commencement of annual or bi-annual Gender Equality Awards, showcasing the best in gender equity design across industries in our State.

GEN VIC's current service offering to the gender equity sector

GEN VIC's service offering is evolving to meet the growing needs of the sector.

1. Sector Capacity Building Training and Development

- Annual Gender Equity Conference – sourcing global, national & state speakers
- Understanding State and Federal Budgets
- Best Practice in Gender Equity Design & Feminist Governance
- Beyond the Gender Binary
- Gender, Disaster & Resilience
- Gendered Violence online e-module



2. Sector support and coordination

- Facilitating consultation & co-ordination of voices for gender equity via Membership Surveys, focus groups, joint statements and other engagement.
- Coordination of sector wide gender equity State and Federal Budget submissions – consolidation of budget bids across the State of Victoria from members and stakeholders.
- Consultation & coordination of policy submissions in priority areas.
- Partnership brokering and collaborative funding applications for whole of government projects; sharing information on tenders, grants and other funding opportunities.
- Strategic Communication for gender equity.
- Facilitating respectful, evidence based discussion on complex challenges in the sector.

3. Gender equity resilience - Occupational Health & Safety for workers in the GE industry

- Collective Care and Self-Care & Backlash awareness.
- Intergenerational resilience and strategy.
- Gendered online hate, managing MRA trolls & gender equity advocacy.

Proposed new GEN VIC service offerings

1. Best Practice - Sector Recognition and Celebration
 - Annual Gender Equity in Victoria Awards
 - International Women's Day
2. The Maintenance of issue based communities of practice
 - Sexual & reproductive rights
 - Gendered violence
 - Gender, disaster, climate change
 - Gender & Economic Security
 - Gender & Communications

Gender equity resilience - occupational health and safety for gender equity practitioners

To practice in gender equity, particularly in a public manner, often attracts unwanted criticism and occasionally threats of violence. It is not uncommon for gender equity organisations to fear the disclosure of their public addresses, to receive telephone abuse from Men's Rights Activists following public appearances and to face trolling online for their opinions.

GEN VIC research into the impact of trolling on women journalists tells us that persistent. This is matched by University of Melbourne research exploring the health consequences of systemic gender discrimination across worksites which revealed repeated, low-level exposure to gender inequity to be as physically and mentally dangerous to women as one-off incidents of medium to high level sexual harassment or assault.

The gender equity sector requires nurturing, care and support to sustain its efforts in the face of pushback. Modelling best practice in occupational health and safety – building supportive, caring communities of practice – grounded in evidence-based research (head); an ethic of care (heart) and grassroots engagement (hand)

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Safe, strong and resilient – securing the gender equity sector (\$Millions)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
INVESTING IN GENDER EQUALITY LEADERS IN COMMUNITY	.23	.23	.23	.23	.92
CELEBRATING GENDER EQUITY SUCCESS - ANNUAL GENDER EQUITY AWARDS	.1	.1	.1	.1	.4
GENDER EQUITY RESILIENCE – OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY FOR WORKERS IN THE GE INDUSTRY	.2	.2	.2	.2	.8
TOTAL	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	2.12



Creating Safe Online Spaces for Women

The Context

In 2017, the United Nations issued a worldwide wake-up call to the public to stem the tide of online violence against women and girls. Online violence against women and girls a significant problem in Australia, impacting 30 per cent of women and girls (Amnesty International 2018). Of that abuse, at least 40 per cent can be characterised as being misogynist in nature (Australian Human Rights Commission 2018) Women internet users, experience online abuse of greater severity and at a higher rate than that of male users (Pew Research Centre 2017), including sexual harassment, image-based abuse, slutshaming, doxing, rape threats and death threats. Gendered online abuse of women can have significant impacts on women's health, income and ability to work, and sense of safety and security, with women reporting anxiety, depression, loss of self-esteem, fear and social isolation as some of the multiple negative effects on their wellbeing (Women's Health East 2018). Online abuse can sometimes move offline too, such as when technology is used to access private information that is then mobilised to physically stalk or harm women.

Women in employment in the public eye experience greater amounts of abuse (Reuters 2019). Research shows that women in sport, women in politics and women in media are three cohorts of women who receive significant amounts of online abuse (Plan International 2019; International Centre for Journalists 2020; Westminster Foundation for Democracy 2018). This abuse undermines these women's professions and silences their voices for fear of more abuse, or stops them from being involved in the public eye at all. If we want a society that is gender equal, where women live free from abuse, it is crucial that women in sport, politics and media are supported through evidence based interventions to prevent gendered hate and violence.

To tackle the issue of online violence, women also require better justice response to the abuse they experience. Despite growing evidence of the prevalence of abuse and its harms to women, police, policy makers and courts are failing to adequately address the problem. The problem is not necessarily that there are not legal mechanisms available, as there are several mechanisms in the legal framework that provide some assistance and protection to victims of technology-facilitated stalking and abuse. However, often women's reports to Police are dismissed as not being serious as they happen

online, or there being no real prospect of physical abuse. However evidence shows that more and more violence online is coming offline into the "real world" (International Centre for Journalists 2020) and women live in fear that they will be abused or their families.

Our Expertise in addressing online abuse

Since 2018 GEN VIC has been leading work to address the online abuse of women. This started with addressing violence through an active only bystander approach, creating a community which comes around and supports women when they are abused online and calls out violence and abusive behaviour. GEN VIC released two animated videos, the first being "Together We're Stronger" targeting those who are likely to respond to abusive comments online but do not know how to, and the second being "Your Voice Matters!" an animated video targeting young men aged between 16-24 showing them it is their responsibility to say something online when they witness harassment of women. Your Voice Matters video was viewed over 16,000 times. This has resulted in GEN VIC developing and delivering training for online active bystander action targeted at young people aged between 16-24.

GEN VIC also identified that journalists were particularly vulnerable to online attacks because the nature of their professions means that they often have public profiles and may be seen as 'outspoken' by people who prefer that women remain silent. An active online presence is a critical part of the job for many journalists, and they cannot simply disconnect from the internet to avoid harassment. This was backed by statistics of two thirds of women journalists experiencing gendered hate and violence online and multiple studies worldwide. GEN VIC then released "Don't Read the Comments: Enhancing online safety for women working in the media" report in partnership with the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance researching the impact and solutions to violence against women in media. This report made several recommendations to create a safety online space for women journalists including: a whole-of-organisation approach to addressing online violence; training on implicit bias and bystander intervention; treating gender based abuse against women journalists on social media and websites as an issue of workplace health and safety; Moderation guidelines and training that explicitly address gendered and other identity-based abuse as a subset of abuse; a comprehension quiz; Requiring media organisations to provide specific support for freelance journalists.

In 2019 GEN VIC was funded again to imple-

ment the recommendations of the Don't Read the Comments report and has been working to implement moderation guidelines for the sector, support for online journalists document for media organisations; specific media training about online abuse and implicit bias; and trialling a comprehension quiz. This package of resources will be launched in March 2021 with partners Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance and Australian Community Managers.

GEN VIC then identified there were two other critical cohorts of women who experience significant levels of abuse. These were women in sport and women in politics. In relation to women in sport, GEN VIC has partnered with La Trobe University on a research project to gain an understanding of the prevalence and impact of abuse on women in sport and to release a report shining a light on the issue of abuse towards women in sport. In relation to women in politics, GEN VIC has been working with GEN VIC's Advisors for Women in Politics has developed a project plan for addressing the online abuse of women, modelled off Don't Read the Comments, to set out a number of recommendations for addressing online abuse.

GEN VIC's proposed service offering

Addressing online violence towards women in the media project

GEN VIC proposes to continue its work with women in the media to complete the implementation of recommendations from the Don't Read the Comments Report.

Addressing online violence towards women in politics project

GEN VIC proposes to conduct anonymous inter-

views women in politics and a literature review to assess a series of recommendations for addressing online abuse of women in politics. GEN VIC will partner with the Pathway to Politics Program at Melbourne University.

Addressing online violence towards women in sport project

GEN VIC proposes to conduct anonymous interviews women in sport and a literature review to develop a series of recommendations for addressing online abuse of women in politics. GEN VIC will aim to partner with Our Watch who have existing relationships with sporting organisations for the implementation of the recommendations.

Young men address online violence towards women project

A 2019 ANROWS report found young men were more bothered by abuse of women than any other age cohort of men but were the least likely to intervene. GEN VIC will partner with Monash University to assess why young men do not intervene and look at positive influences in behaviour that could support active bystander action. GEN VIC will then develop a training module for young men that can be incorporated into Respectful Relationships Education in high schools and delivered to youth groups.

Addressing online violence in the justice system
GEN VIC aims to partner with Victorian Police and the Victims of Crime Commissioner to identify what charges can be made against perpetrators of online abuse and what support and training police require to respond to online abuse. GEN VIC will then aim to partner with Victoria police to run training to new recruits and existing officers.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: Creating Safe Online Spaces for Women (\$Millions)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
ADDRESSING ONLINE VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN IN THE MEDIA PROJECT	.1	.15	.15	.15	.55
ADDRESSING ONLINE VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN IN POLITICS PROJECT	.2	.15	.15	.15	.65
ADDRESSING ONLINE VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN IN SPORT PROJECT	.2	.2	.2	.2	.8
YOUNG MEN ADDRESS ONLINE VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN PROJECT	.3	.1	.1	.1	.6
ADDRESSING ONLINE VIOLENCE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM	.1	1	1	1	3.1
TOTAL	.9	1.5	1.5	1.5	5.4

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Women’s Information Referral Exchange - Building Leadership and Financial Capacity for Women

The Women’s Information Referral Exchange provides information and advice to women across Victoria via its telephone advice line, supporting women’s leadership growth, resilience and financial capacity.

Lead for Change is a primary prevention project which aims to change the community attitudes that underpin gendered violence through

transformational, persuasive intersectional gender equity conversations modelled on community activism.

SARA is a financial capability program for women victims of family violence, using proven behavioural change strategies, recently independently evaluated as worlds best practice as a response and prevention project.

The Intersectionality Action Plan is a whole-of-organisation structured approach to advancing diversity and inclusion to ensure long term sustainability to deliver positive outcomes in the lives of women, nonbinary and gender diverse people.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED: WIRE’s leadership and financial capacity building (\$M)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
LEAD FOR CHANGE PROJECT	.16	.12	.12	.13	.53
SARA FINANCIAL CAPABILITY TRAINING FOR WOMEN	.25	.25	.26	.27	1.03
INTERSECTIONALITY ACTION PLAN	.17				.17
TOTAL	.58	.37	.38	.4	1.73





Our Members



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BECOME A MEMBER

GEN VIC represents organisations and individuals across Victoria who advance gender equity and hold values that align with feminist principles. If you or your organisation wants to be part of social and community change - then join us! Together we can make a difference and change the future of women and girls' equality and health now, and in the future.

genvic.org.au/join-us

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GENDER EQUITY VICTORIA

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