

**63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women  
economic Security4Women's Submission re Australia's Position  
on the Priority Theme**

***"Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls***

1. Social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure are integral to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. **Sex-disaggregated data & the need for a Time Use Survey**
  - a. Sex-disaggregated data is imperative and Australia's position on collecting the data.
  - b. The need for a Time Use Survey is integral to meet the 2030 Agenda for the SDGs.
  - c. Time use surveys (TUS) provide information essential to measure and contextualize economic activity and identify opportunities for greater national productivity.
  - d. Time use surveys provide information for decision making that is unavailable using other measures. Time diaries provide an exhaustive record of all activities undertaken over a day or week, yielding a versatile reusable resource that can serve multiple and unanticipated objectives. Strengths include accurate time measurement, information on the frequency and timing of activities, where and with whom activities take place, interrelationship between activities and between the activities of different individuals. Attempts to collect this information using more conventional survey instruments are unacceptably error-prone. Regular time use surveys allow cross-national comparisons and the study of trends.

**Recommendation:** We wish Australia to consult at CSW63 to learn how time use surveys can provide valuable data to assist the Australian Government to understand the value.

**3. Unpaid care work**

- a. Extended interruptions in work due to caring requirements generally results in women unable to return to their previous level of expertise or salary grade. Some women are forced to move into part-time or casual work which are invariably at much lower rates of pay. Further, that women feel compelled to take on the primary caregiving roles only serves to compound their financial security and economic welling in later life.
- b. The ongoing cultural and social acceptance that caring responsibilities are primarily women's work, is both irrelevant and unsustainable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are more highly-educated women graduating from tertiary institutions; more women seeking a life-long career; more women seeking independence through full-time work; and more women making financial decisions and choices around housing, education, travel and in the pursuit of other interests.
- c. It is generally found that women in later life uphold the unpaid work of the voluntary sector, by providing caring for their immediate family, or by providing their time and service to the wider service sectors and charities.

**Recommendation:** Given Australia's increasingly diverse population, better sex and gender disaggregated data is required to understand and consider the implications of this in the care economy. The Australian Government could learn from other countries how they support both paid and unpaid care work.

#### 4. Gender Pay Gap

- a. The gender pay gap has been a permanent feature of the Australian workforce, and the workforce of every country in the world. Reasons for its existence are complex; it may not be a result of direct discrimination but may in part be explained by differences in the way men and women work, the industries they work in and the level of skills and experiences individuals may have<sup>1</sup>.
- b. There is consensus that the closing of the gender pay gap is desirable beyond just the basic notion of fairness. The economic consequences extend beyond an individual woman's economic security; at a macro level it is estimated that if women were to participate in today's economy identically to men, it would add \$28 trillion, or 26% to the global GDP by 2025<sup>2</sup>.
  - i. Men receive greater remuneration compared to women in **almost every scenario**, but particularly in more senior occupation levels;
  - ii. Female managers are more likely to be remunerated closer to their male peers if the managerial environment is heavily male-dominated, and conversely male managers working in female-dominated organisations can expect to earn considerably more than their female colleagues;
  - iii. The Financial and Services industry records the highest full-time gender pay gap of 35% when bonuses and discretionary income is included;
  - iv. The smallest gender pay gap of between 7 to 10% is found in the Public Administration and Safety, Wholesale, Trade, Education and Training industries. This may be because most of these industries are strongly tied to public/government funding; and
  - v. Increased representation of women on Boards is associated with significant reductions in gender pay gaps for those organisations.

**Recommendation:** Consult with countries like Finland who do not have a gender pay gap

#### 5. Inclusion of "Older Women"

- a. Older women are not counted in most of these types of headings and we feel it is important to recognize ALL women, we are after-all quite diverse.

**Recommendation:** To include in the language "ALL" women.

6. We reiterate the recommendations from the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women when it conducted its four-year review in Geneva, July 2018. The recommendations can be found on page 13/19, Clause 46 "The Committee recommends that the State Party: points a) to d). The link is below.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/BCEC\\_WGEA\\_Gender\\_Pay\\_Equity\\_Insights\\_2016\\_Report.pdf](https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/BCEC_WGEA_Gender_Pay_Equity_Insights_2016_Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>