

# GENDER, DISASTER AND RESILIENCE: TOWARDS A GENDER EQUAL RECOVERY



## FACTSHEET:

### >> Economic security for women

Disasters, such as pandemic, bushfire, drought and climate change embed inequalities and injustices that already exist within our society.

Prior to COVID-19, Australia enjoyed relatively high incomes and economic growth, but prosperity was not shared evenly between men and women. Over the life course, Australian women lag behind men in jobs, incomes and superannuation balances. The discrepancy is largely due to gendered ideas about the different value of men and women's work. For example, women undertake **more than 70 per cent of the nation's 'invisible unpaid work'** in home and caring roles, but for historic reasons the State's gross domestic product doesn't value this work – even though it is estimated to be worth \$208 Billion to the Victorian economy.

Australia has been going backwards on all indicators of economic security for women for some time, despite fragile gains for women in the workplace. The impact of COVID-19 on the economy risks rolling back female labor-force participation, limiting women's ability to support themselves and their families, which is especially problematic in female-headed households. Some women's lifetime earnings will never recover from the disruptions caused by COVID-19. For women with overlapping experiences of race, class, disability and sexual identity, unequal economic outcomes will compound leading to increased risk of poverty.

#### COVID-19 HAS HAD A DEVASTATING ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WOMEN:

- 1 More women than men have become unemployed.** Overrepresented in part-time and casual roles, and in low-paid sectors such as hospitality, tourism and the arts, 55% of people in the unemployment line because of the pandemic are women.
- 2 Casual women workers are missing out on Job Keeper payments.** Most of the workers with less than 12 months continuous employment are women returning to work after child-raising. Without government support, businesses relying on the casual labour of women are unlikely to survive the pandemic, creating indefinite job loss.
- 3 Women are disproportionately represented on the frontline of the pandemic** in the health, aged and disability care, early childhood, education and food retailing industries. Despite keeping the country running in essential service workforces, women in these industries are poorly paid because of gendered attitudes towards feminized work.
- 4 Women make up the majority of single-parent households where job loss is catastrophic,** thrusting women and children into poverty.
- 5 Women are performing more hours of unpaid caregiving and household chores,** with no recognition and negative impact on their economic abilities. Women spend an additional four months working per year on unpaid work. This "double shift" has intensified in lockdown, with the added burden of education support during school closures and the need to care for older relatives in lieu of support services.

Women's  
unemployment

**HAS JUMPED  
FIVE-FOLD**

since the  
crisis.

**55% OF  
LOST JOBS**

were jobs held by women.

Majority of casual workers with  
less than 12 months continuous  
employment are women, and

**DO NOT  
HAVE ACCESS**

to Jobkeeper  
support

Australia has a

**HIGHLY GENDER  
SEGREGATED  
JOB MARKET**

with women concentrated in retail,  
hospitality and accommodation –  
some of the hardest hit industries  
during the crisis.

**We need the road to economic recovery  
to be gender equal**

**ECONOMIC SECURITY MEANS HAVING A STABLE INCOME, AFFORDABLE SHELTER AND INCOME FOR FOOD AND BASIC LIVING EXPENSES. IT ALSO MEANS HAVING OPPORTUNITIES TO THRIVE THROUGH EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT.**

A gender equal economy is a human right, but it is also essential for prosperity. Research from across the world has shown gender equity delivers greater productivity, higher profits and economic growth. It prevents violence against women and girls and diminishes corruption. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier.

COVID-19 is an opportunity to rebuild our lives and economy with gender equality at the heart of everything we do. Recovery must lead to a more equal world.

# >> Recommendations for gender equal recovery and resilience

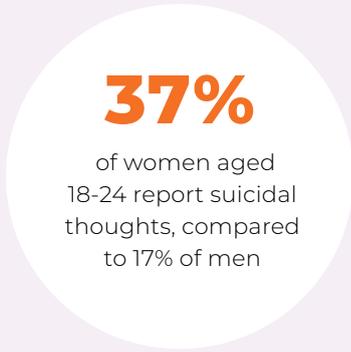
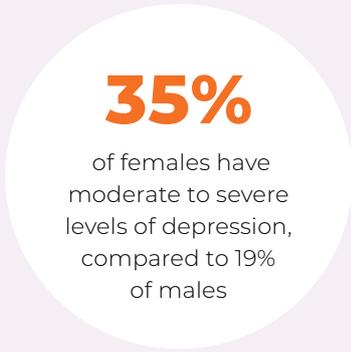
- **Endorse the GEN VIC Joint Statement on Gender Equality and COVID-19**
- **Get gender equality investment back on track through a significant stimulus injection in the State Budget and the introduction of gender responsive budgeting.**
- **Intervene and stimulate the economy in a gender equal manner by:**
  - *Stimulating jobs in industries that employ women. Nation-building infrastructure investment must include social infrastructure as well as bricks and mortar so that women and men benefit equally from job creation and recovery stimulus.*
  - *Creating a statewide Gender & Disaster Workforce to support recovery at a local level in communities impacted by COVID-19 and the Summer Bushfires*
  - *Building a personal protective equipment manufacturing sector to guarantee supply to the entire essential service workforce*
  - *Providing wage subsidies and other supports to workers, including women in casual jobs*
- *Closing the gender pay gap through legislation*
- *Guaranteeing superannuation contributions while on maternity and paternity leave;*
- **Retain universal free childcare** in a way that is sustainable for early childhood educators and providers, to support workforce participation.
- **Provide recognition and support to carers and educators at home.** This may include increasing maternity and paternity leave provision, a government-funded “carer credit” in the form of superannuation payments or pension top-ups in recognition of savings to the budget delivered by women and initiatives to encourage shared care between men and women.
- **Collect, analyse and publish sex and gender disaggregated data on the impact of COVID-19** to ensure policy, planning, investment and communications are nuanced for gender.

## Resources

- *economic Security4Women (2018) [economic Security4Women Defining the concept of economic security for women: Policy recommendations to boost women’s economic security](#)*
- *economic Security4Women (2019) [Issues confronting Australian women from culturally diverse backgrounds: Progress to date and what needs to be actioned to address the remaining issues?’ Discussion Paper](#)*
- *economic Security4Women (2018) [Superannuation and the casualisation of work Discussion Paper](#)*
- *economic Security4Women (n.d) [The role of carers and the impact on economic security for women](#)*
- *GEN VIC & Per Capita (2019) [Back On Track: Gender Responsive Budgeting Submission](#)*
- *[Let’s Connect: Women’s Voices Through COVID-19 - Economic Security For Women](#)*

# COVID-19 IS A GENDERED PROBLEM

During the COVID-19 crisis, women are experiencing **higher levels** of depression, anxiety and stress than men.

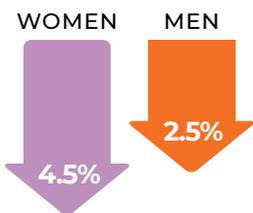


DURING LOCKDOWN, WOMEN ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO HAVE FELT:



TO THE WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC AT THE ALFRED HOSPITAL IN ONE MONTH.

**55%** of job losses due to COVID-19 are women.



WOMEN ARE DEPLETING THEIR SUPERANNUATION AT A HIGHER RATE THAN MEN WHEN WITHDRAWING EMERGENCY COVID-19 FUNDS.

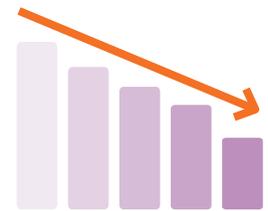


MAJORITY OF THE CASUAL WORKERS UNABLE TO ACCESS JOBKEEPER ARE WOMEN.

**\$205 BILLION**

VALUE OF UNPAID LABOUR BY VICTORIAN WOMEN

DELOITTE REPORT 2019



THE PAYROLL IMPACT ON WOMEN HAS BEEN GREATER THAN MEN ACROSS MANY INDUSTRIES.

**Family Violence stats** in lockdown:

**200+**

CALLS A WEEK TO VICTORIA POLICE

**50%**

INCREASE TO MAGISTRATES' COURT

**94%**

INCREASE TO MENS SERVICES

The majority of essential workers have been women and are in the **lowest paid jobs**.



CLEANERS



TEACHERS



EARLY  
CHILDCARE



RETAIL  
WORKERS

**A GENDER EQUAL RECOVERY  
REQUIRES GENDER EQUAL SOLUTIONS**